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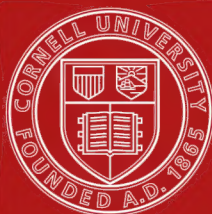
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A Literary History of the English People

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A Literary History of The English People

* * *

From the Renaissance
To the Civil War

II

By

J. J. Jusserand

London

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BOOK V.

(continued).

THE AGE OF ELIZABETH.

CHAPTER V.

THE PREDECESSORS OF SHAKESPEARE.

I.

FOUR Tudors had disappeared ; Queen Elizabeth had been many years on the throne, and no signs could yet be discerned of the extraordinary development that dramatic art was to attain in England. During the main part of the sixteenth century, that country still had, so to speak, anybody's dramatic literature. The differences were unimportant ; they have been noticed only because they became later so conspicuous.

Until the last quarter of the century, nothing appeared in the island which could not be seen elsewhere too, and no particular merit was observable. Mysteries preserved their popularity ; in spite of all the efforts to suppress them, they were performed up to the end of the Tudor period. The Creation, Epiphany, and Passion, the manger at Bethlehem, and the cross on Golgotha continued to edify the multitude ; the rant of tetrarchs, sultans, and pagan emperors, the tricks and black deeds of devils, continued to amuse or terrify. Sir Thomas More speaks, with personal experience as it seems, of the "bragging boasts and frantic rages" of a "Soudan in a stage play" ; in the early years of the seventeenth century, Shakespeare still makes fun of Herod,

and speaks as one addressing an audience obviously familiar with the manners of the tyrant; Carew describes the Spanish language as a noisy speech, "like the Devill in a play."¹ Religious subjects remained so popular that, after London had her theatres and her regular companies of players, professional dramatists of the time of Elizabeth continued to compose, in view of pleasing the many, quantities of "Jeffte," "Samson," "Abrame and Lotte," "Heaster and Asheweros,"² which brought in as much money as the plays of Marlowe himself: and the Puritans were denouncing this profane use of the Scriptures. In the inventory of the Lord Admiral's troupe figured, in 1598, this significant item: "One Hell mought" (mouth). The same tastes prevailed, of course, in the provinces. A biblical drama was played at Beverley in 1564, and among the properties figured the usual hell mouth, "with a nether chap" (jaw), the "city of Jerusalem with towers and pynacles," and the King's Palace at Nineveh.³

Like the countries of the Continent, England had her moralities, wise, pious, and well-meaning plays, with a melancholy note of frequent recurrence,⁴ a number of them being nothing but the debates and "disputoisons"

¹ "Epistle concerning the excellencies of the English tongue," by Richard Carew (above, II. 323), published with Camden's "Remaines," in 1614.

² All mentioned in "Henslowe's Diary," years 1594 to 1602 (below, p. 62). Cf. Stubbes, "Anatomy of Abuses," ed. Furnivall, p. 140.

³ A. F. Leach, "Some English Plays and Players, 1220-1548," in "An English Miscellany presented to Dr. Furnivall," 1901, p. 228.

⁴ Role of Time in the "Triall of Treasure," printed 1567, of Death in "Pride of Life," end of fourteenth or beginning of fifteenth century, in "Everyman," printed ab. 1529, ed. Goedeke, Hanover, 1865, or Sidgwick, London, 1902. On English moralities, and, generally speaking, on the early English drama, see, *e.g.*, Mézières, "Prédécesseurs et contemporains de Shakespeare," 1881; A. W. Ward, "A History of English Dramatic Literature," London, 1899, 3 vols. 8vo (a considerable work, with a tendency at times to admire perhaps too generously: a not unpleasant defect, if indeed it be one); Symonds, "Shakspeare's Predecessors," 1900; E. K. Chambers, "Mediæval Stage," Oxford, 1903, 2 vols. 8vo (a very full and important

of former days turned into dramas: Witty and Witless, Wealth and Health, Marriage and Celibacy, etc.¹ There, as in the French examples of the same art, Virtues recommended virtue, Nature explained the mysteries of nature, and Satan advised the audience not to follow his advice. As late at least as the last years of the sixteenth century, abstract personages continued to be introduced into historical or real-life dramas, and even regular moralities were still composed for a public whom nothing wearied, whom every subject interested, and who enjoyed divining the purport of transparent allegories. On the same day theatre-goers might be seen reading the play-bills and hesitating whether they would go and listen to New-fangledness and Folly, in a morality by Robert Wilson,² or to King Richard III. and Lady Anne in a drama by William Shakespeare.

account of the subject); F. E. Schelling, "Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1642," Boston, 1908, 2 vols., 8vo. Cf. above, vol. I. p. 439.

Principal series of reprints: Dodsley's "Old Plays," ed. Hazlitt, 1874, ff. 15 vols.; J. S. Farmer, "Early English Dramatists," London, 1905, ff. (modernised, needs revising); "Tudor Facsimile Texts," by the same, 1908, ff.; the handsome and careful reprints of the Malone Society, London, 1907, ff.; Alois Brandl, "Quellen des weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare," Strasbourg, 1898, 8vo (three moralities, three interludes, two dramas on the Reformation, etc.); W. Bang, "Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas," Louvain and London; Manly, "Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama," Boston, 1897, ff. 8vo; C. M. Gayley, "Representative English Comedies, from the beginning to Shakespeare," New York, 1903.

¹ De Silva writes to Philip II. that on March 12, 1565, was given at court "a comedy in English, of which I understood just as much as the Queen told me. The plot was founded on the question of marriage discussed between Juno and Diana, Juno advocating marriage and Diana chastity. Jupiter gave a verdict in favour of matrimony. . . . The Queen turned to me and said: 'This is all against me.'" "Calendar of State Papers [at] Simancas," year 1565, p. 404. As late as 1615 a play was performed at Cambridge which under the name of "Worke for cutlers, or a merry dialogue betwene Sword, Rapier, and Dagger," was nothing but a "disputoisson" (ed. Sieveking and Ward, Cambridge, 1905).

² In his "Coblers Prophetie," 1594. "The three Ladies of London," by the same (or, as some think, by a namesake), "as it hath been publiquely

Plays of this sort, in which human qualities and faults are drawn apart and isolated, where the "Dramatis Personæ" are called Avarice, Hypocrisy, Good Counsel, would have led straight to the comedy of characters, if the English temper and genius had not finally put obstacles in the way. Obstacles there were: for at this very period, England was becoming more and more individualised and concentrated, breaking the ties which had, for centuries, united her to Rome, establishing her own form of religion, gaining a firmer belief in her own originality, power, and greatness. Her temperament could therefore develop more freely, and it led her towards experience rather than abstraction, and towards the study of individuals rather than of types. In France, the evolution was perfected, and Avarice, Hypocrisy, and Good Counsel assumed a permanent place in the literature of the world under the names of Harpagon, Tartuffe, and Eliante.

In every country, some farcical scenes and real life personages had been associated, in moralities, with grave abstractions.¹ Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth

played," 1584, and the continuation of the same: "The Pleasant and Stately Morall of the three Lords and three Ladies of London," 1590, are satirical moralities which enjoyed great success. Allegorical personages are mixed with real ones, for example, in the "Lamentable Tragedie mixed full of plesant mirth . . . of Cambises" (a title fully justified) by Th. Preston, London, 1570 (?), and in "A new Tragical Comedie of Appius and Virginia," by R. B., London, 1575, 4to. Cf. below, pp. 428, 454, n. 2.

¹ In "Godly queene Hester," an "enterlude drawn oute of the Holy Scripture," pr. 1561 (ed. Greg, 1904, Bang's "Materialen"), where Ahasuerus appears as reigning "from India to Ethiopia plaine," real life personages predominate. In "Kyng Daryus . . . taken out of the . . . thyrd Booke of Esdras," 1565, and "Johan the Evangelyst" (before 1557? Malone Society), real personages play only a secondary part; in "Johan" in particular the scriptural pretext is of the thinnest, and the play is one long allusion to contemporary manners and religious quarrels. Yvell Counsayle has experienced at Coventry what the pillory was:

. . . There knaves set me on the pyllery,
And threwe egges at my-hede,
So sore that my nose dyd blede (l. 375).

centuries, that is, during the whole period in which this kind of drama flourished in England, fights, dances, songs,¹ suppers at the tavern,² patriotic appeals,³ "boasts" from exalted personages,⁴ had relieved the dulness of sermon-like speeches. So had also the pranks of the *Vice* (the clown in a way, or fool, of these early plays, the *Badin* of the French stage),⁵ and the roarings of the Devil with his crew of subaltern fiends. Sad to say, when we remember

¹ Songs especially were frequent. In the newly recovered "Enterlude of Welth and Helth," entered 1557, all the personages begin their part by a song in English, French, or Dutch; Health and Wealth open the play with "a ballat of two parts"; Ill-will enters "with some jest" not otherwise specified. Reprinted by the Malone Society, 1907.

² In "The Interlude of the Four Elements," 1510(?); "A goodly Enterlude of Nature," by Medwall, 1538; "The Enterlude of Youth," 1555, etc.

³ Consider Englyshmen, how valiant they be and ferce,
Of al nacions none such, when they have their helth;
No land can do us harme, but wyth falsehod or stelth,
Remembre what nombre of men, or artilerie, and good ordinance,
Specially ye grace of God, which is our chief forderance.

Same "Enterlude of Welth and Helth," Malone Society, l. 580. This trust in artillery and God is worthy of note; cf. above, vol. I. p. 491.

⁴ *Mundus*. Assarye, Acaye and Almayne,
Canadoyse, Capadoyse and Cananee,
Babyloyne, Brabon, Burgoyne and Bretayne (etc., etc., etc.)
All these londis, at myn a-vyse,
Arn castyn to my werdly wyse.

"The Castle of Perseverance," ab. 1425, in "The Macro Plays," ed. Furnivall and Pollard, Early English Text Society, 1904, p. 82.

⁵ In "Godly queene Hester," pr. 1561, Hardydardy plays the part of the fool (=Vice):

Ye wene I lacke wytte, it may well be so!
Yet a fole, when it doth happe, may somtyme chaunce to stoppe a gappe
When wyse men wyll not mell. (l. 659).

Unedifying speeches were delivered by the *Vice*; Puttenham declares that certain jingles of rimes are low and vulgar, and fit "such light or lascivious Poemes, which are commonly more commodiously uttered by these buffons or vices in playes then by any other person."—"Arte of English Poesie," 1589, ed. Arber, 1895, p. 97. Cf. above, vol. I. p. 491.

the good intentions of the authors, Vice and Devil were the most popular and best applauded of their characters. In one of the oldest English moralities the audience is notified that the devil is ready to enter, but that he will not come before the collection has been made: let them be generous if they want to see Tytivillus. We shall "gather mony" now, says New Guise,

Ellys ther xall no man hyme se . . .

Now-a-days. Hi lovyth no grotis, nor pens or to-pens:

Gyf ws rede reyallys, yf ye wyll se hys abhomynabull
presens.¹

On rarer occasions, a more difficult means of pleasing was resorted to, and genuine touches of humour enlivened the audience, creating a precedent for no less a master than Sheridan: Envy, strongly suspected of mischief and asked his name, answers, "Charity."²

In France, the various elements crudely juxtaposed in early moralities became, by degrees, harmoniously fused; abstractions ceased to be so abstract; low realism was no longer so low, and dramatists came gradually nearer to the high comedy of characters. In London, the part allotted to realities went on increasing; the many little occurrences with which ordinary existences are encumbered, encumbered also the plays of authors bent upon copying life; abstract personages disappeared, and the comedy of manners and observation remained in possession of the stage. A visible sign of these early beginnings remained, however: the custom of giving to the characters names which are like labels; comedy writers followed in the wake of morality writers; Sheridan accepted the custom as well as Massinger; after Ambition and Hypocrisy, we had

¹ "Mankind," ab. 1475, "Macro Plays," ed. Furnivall and Pollard, p. 17.

² "A new Interlude of Impacyente Poverte, newly imprinted," 1560.

Sir Giles Overreach and Joseph Surface. This habit, which dates back several centuries, is not yet entirely lost.

Lending itself easily, like any kind of allegorical writing, to all sorts of ends, the morality, so long as it continued acceptable to the public, was made use of not only by the good people who wanted to instruct, but also by the politics and fanatics who wanted to convince or confute. Newspapers did not exist; the play, either performed or merely printed, was one of the most effective means of propagating ideas. In moralities, therefore, offering a mixture of allegory and historical facts, international rivalries were discussed, or the changes in religion, Philip's ambitions, and the Pope's decrees. Philip resented being derided somehow, somewhere, in the distant isle, and on hearing of an English play being performed in which the Holy See, the Catholic faith, and he himself, were held up to ridicule, he hastened the preparations for the Armada; neither the piratical attempts of the English on his possessions, nor the friendship recently formed between Elizabeth and the Sultan, had thrown him into such a rage.* The stage play was indeed a powerful weapon; Catholics turned it against Protestants, and Protestants against Catholics; and the men in office, whose motto, whatever party happened to be in power, was ever the same: peace and conformity, tried to silence scoffers. Roo put Wolsey into a comedy, and Wolsey put Roo into prison,

* "His Majesty has received a summary of one of these [comedies] which was recently represented, in which all sorts of evil is spoken of the Pope, the Catholic religion, and the King, who is accused of spending all his time in the Escorial with the monks of S. Jerome, attending only to his buildings and a hundred other insolences which I refrain from sending to your Serenity." H. Lippomano, Venetian ambassador to Spain, to the Doge and Senate, July 20, 1586; "Calendar of State Papers . . . in the archives of Venice," vol. viii. Cf. as an example of a political morality, Lyndesay's "Thrie Estaits," above, vol. II. p. 118.

one good turn deserves another. Several of John Bale's plays, his "Thre Lawes," his "Kynge Johan" were, as we have seen, scenic diatribes against the Pope and the Catholics, a mixture of history and abstractions, vague ranting and definite accusations. Clement VII. had paid, we are told,

For hys papacye,
Thre hondred thousand good duckates of lawfull monye.

Under the features of King John, Bale had described Henry VIII., and sided with him in the question of supremacy, unceremoniously transferred from the sixteenth to the thirteenth century.¹

Catholics did not fail, so long as they could, to use the same weapons, witness the "Merye Enterlude entitled Respublica, made in the . . . first yeaere of the most prosperous Reigne of our moste gracious soveraigne quene Marye the first."² There figured, as personages, "Avarice alias policie, the Vice of the playe," "Oppression, alias Reformation, an other gallaunt," and "Nemesis, the goddess of redresse and correction," which goddess, the prologue ominously informs us, was none other than the Queen herself:

¹ Above, vol. II. p. 195. By the same, several religious plays: "Johan Baptystes," "The Temptacyon of our Lorde," 1538, etc., and other dramatic works, a list of which is supplied by him in his "Catalogue," several ("Proditiones Papistarum," "De Imposturis Thomæ Becketi," etc.) being lost. In his "Index Britannicæ Scriptorum," Bale attributes to youthful Edward VI. the composition of a play in the same style: "Edwardus sextus Anglorum rex 11 ætatis anno scripsit Comediam de meretrice Babylonica," "Index," ed. R. L. Poole and Mary Bateson, Oxford, 1902, p. 67.

² Reprinted, *e.g.* by Brandl, "Quellen des weltlichen Dramas," 1898, p. 281. A different play, also a morality, in which figured Humanum Genus, Reason, Veritye, Plentie, Skarsitie, Good and Bad Angel, etc., was performed at Mary's coronation; we know only who the characters were and what stuffs were purchased (including two pairs of wings for the angels) to dress them.—Mrs. Charlotte C. Stopes, in *Athenæum*, September 9, 1905.

Maie joyne all together to thanke God and rejoyce
 That he hath sent Marye our soveraigne and quene
 To reforme thabuses . . .
 She is oure most wise and worthie Nemesis.

This was a court play; there were others, less favourably looked upon by the authorities. The Government, in fact, throughout the century, never ceased to interfere: Henry, Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, each in turn, periodically restrict the performance of plays, and prohibit altogether those in which are expounded ideas different from theirs. Henry VIII., as we have seen, was very positive; all bad and wicked plays should be "utterly abolished extinguished and forbydden"; by wicked plays must be understood the works of "arrogant and ignorant persons, wherof some pretending to be lerned," but their learning can be but a sham as their opinions vary from the King's; they "subverte the verry trew and perfect exposition, doctrine and declaracion of the sayd Scripture," not only in sermons and treatises, but in "balades, playes, rymes, songes and other fantasies." Good plays alone shall be maintained, by which is meant, as we know, those agreeing with the present "doctryne" of the King or any other he may happen to "set forth" when he pleases.¹

Edward VI.'s edicts are no less severe against people who presume to dispute of "his Majesties affayres," and they forbid "any common players or other persons . . . to play in thenglish tong any maner Enterlude, play or mattre, without they have special license." Mary renews the same prohibitions, only turning them against different people.² Immediately after her accession, Elizabeth finds

¹ Proclamation of H. VIII., May 26, 1545. Hazlitt, "The English Drama and the Stage," 1869, p. 6; above, II. 196. Cf. Virginia Gildersleeve, "Government regulation of the Elizabethan drama." New York, 1908.

² Proclamations of Edward VI., August 6, 1549, April 28, 1551, and of Mary, August 18, 1553; *ibid.* pp. 8, 13, 17.

that all sorts of questions which ought to be left alone are discussed in "common Interludes in the English tongue," even the Book of Common Prayer being held up to scorn. She therefore forbids "al maner Interludes to be playde, eyther openly or privately, except the same be notified before hande and licensed." No license shall be granted to plays wherein "either matters of religion or of the governaunce of the estate . . . shalbe handled"; let the "nobilitie and gentilmen . . . take good order in thys behalfe wyth their servauntes being players."¹ Among these "gentilmen" was Dudley, whose first care, at the beginning of the reign, had been to attach to his person a troupe of actors, several members of which were to be later Shakespeare's fellow-players.

Like other countries, England had her popular feasts, her solemn processions and pageants, her court masques or ballets, all of a semi-dramatic character, as they were often interspersed with dialogues, or even real diminutive plays: May games with Robin Hood; Saint George's plays with the holy knight vanquishing the dragon; processions of maskers on the occasion of a banquet or marriage feast; eves of St. John or St. Peter; "midsummer watches," of which Stow describes two sorts,²

¹ 1 Eliz. ch. 11 (Act of Uniformity), *e.g.* in Prothero, "Select Statutes," 1894, p. 16; also, Proclamation of May 16, 1559, Transactions of the "New Shakspeare Society," 1884, Appendix iii.; and Hazlitt, *ibid.*, p. 19. Cf. above, vol. II. pp. 256 ff. and "Acts of the Privy Council," July 28 and August 15, 1597, new series, vol. xxvii.; below, pp. 37, 98.

² On midsummer watches and pageants, the decking of the streets with "white lilies and such like," the various shows, the "lamps of glass, with oil burning in them all the night," morris dancers, musicians, giants, etc., see Stow, "Survey of London," 1603, pp. 103 ff., 154, 161. The pageants (cars) were housed in Leadenhall and painted afresh every year. The painters played an important part: "The lofts above (in Leadenhall) were partly used by the painters in working for the decking of pageants and other devises for beautifying of the watch and watchmen," p. 161. But the shows were not so brilliant in his days, the author declares, as in the early part of the sixteenth century;

the "marching" ones and the standing ones, these last being a kind of *tableaux vivants*; royal entries into a town, with appropriate interludes, speeches and dialogues; princely visits to a University, or to a nobleman who would transform, on such an occasion, his park into Olympus and his lake into Neptune's realm. Gods emerged from bushes, descended from heaven, danced on the grass, and nymphs swam across the water. Elizabeth was never tired of enjoying this open air and mid-water mythology. Leicester devised in her honour the famous "pleasures at Kenilworth," where, among many agreeable inventions, the Sibyl predicted to the Queen a glorious reign, a wild man conversed with Echo, and Hercules, the porter of the castle, was "overcome by viewe of the rare beautie and princelie countenance of her Majestie."¹

The town of Norwich offered Elizabeth a whole week of semi-dramatic pageantry, and spent enormous sums in velvet, silk, and cloth of gold. Churchyard the poet, entrusted with the management of the festivities, has left an account of them, where successes are gloried in, and disasters good-humouredly acknowledged. He had prepared for the coming of the Queen a music "which was marvellous sweete and good," but "the rudenesse of some ringer of belles," who could not be stopped, "did somewhat hinder the noyse and harmonie." After which,

other pleasures were replacing them. On the St. George plays, see *e.g.* Chambers, "Mediæval Stage," i. p. 210; on masques, etc., see W. W. Greg, "A List of Masques, Pageants, etc.," Bibliographical Society, 1902.

¹ July 9, 1575; words by Gascoigne and others: "The Princelye Pleasures at the courte at Kenelworth," printed 1576; in "Complete Poems," 1869, vol. ii. On solemnities of this sort, see Nichols, "Progresses . . . of Queen Elizabeth," 1823, 3 vols. 4to; *e.g.* in vol. iii., an account of a mythological aquatic fete offered to the Queen by the Earl of Hertford, with a curious engraving of 1591 reproduced, p. 101. Same tastes in France; see the great tapestries preserved in the Arazzi Museum, Florence, and representing similar festivities given by Henri [III.] at Fontainebleau.

"an excellent boy," wearing on his head "a crimson scarfe wrought with gold, folded on the Turkishe fashion aboute his browes," complimented the Queen, who deigned to say: "This device is fine." Another day, Mercury, sent by "Jehova"—for Churchyard is not afraid of modernising his mythology—came on a car which "seemed to flye," as it was "covered with birdes and naked sprites hanging by the heeles in the aire, and cloudes cunningly painted out." A morality was next performed before the Queen: Chastity was seen taking hold of Cupid's bow and offering it to Elizabeth, "to learn to shoote at whome she pleased, since none coulde wounde hir Highnesse hart." Elizabeth, doubtless, also found this device "fine." Another morality was performed the next day before the Queen and the French ambassador, and there was to be some pageantry on the water; but everything went wrong; the players had to act in such a narrow room that they could scarcely move; and as for the water pageant they mistook the appointed place, and "hoovered on the water three long houres," while the Queen was walking elsewhere, and so night came. The Thursday had been reserved for the most graceful invention of all; a large hole had been dug in a field near the river; a green cloth, stretched over it, concealed musicians and boys, the latter with "long, goodly tresses" of false hair were disguised as "water nymphs," so skilfully that "sondry took them to be yong girles and wenches prepared for the nonce to procure a laughter." They were to spring, one after the other, from their hiding-place, make their bow to the Queen, and "daunce with timbrels that were trammed with belles and other jangling things," behaving themselves, "as neere as could be ymaged, like the Phayries." But torrents of rain overcame them in their hole and the disaster was so complete "that it was," writes the poet with his imperturbable good-humour, "a greater pastime

to see us looke like drowned rattes than to have beheld the uttermost of the shewes rehearsed." ¹

Processions of disguised maskers, with speeches and dialogues, frequently enlivened balls and banquets, in England as elsewhere. One such procession can be seen in a picture of the sixteenth century now preserved at the National Gallery, and representing the festivities for the marriage of Sir Henry Unton, twice ambassador to France and a personal friend of King Henri IV.; a number of Cupids and masked deities march, to the sound of an orchestra, before the married couple and their guests. A show of the same sort, "a living drollery," graces Alonso's banquet in Shakespeare's "Tempest": "Several strange shapes . . . dance about it with gentle actions of salutation." Spenser introduces one into his "Faerie Queene," and it takes him one hundred and seventy lines to describe it:

After whom marcht a jolly company,
In manner of a maske, enranged orderly;

There were Fancy and Desire, Fear, Hope, and Cruelty.

Next after her, the winged God himselfe
Came riding on a Lion ravenous,

while minstrels were "making goodly merriment." ² Sometimes the performance was a mimic one, without words, or took the shape of an allegorical ballet. Brantôme describes one that he saw at the English court, the subject of which was the Wise and the Foolish Virgins: "Even the Queen danced, and with perfect grace and royal majesty," 1561.

In other cases, maskers spoke and the guests were

¹ "A Discourse of the Queenes Maiesties entertainement . . . devised by Th. Churchyarde, Gent., with divers shewes of his own invention, sette out at Norwich." London, 1578, 4to. Cf. below, p. 270, n. 3.

² Book iii. canto xii.

treated to little dramas interspersed with, or followed by, dances and music, usually written in the flowery and eulogistic style befitting such occurrences : "A Masque. Enter Iris. . . . Enter Ceres. . . . Enter Juno. . . . Enter certain Nymphs. . . . Enter certain reapers properly habited : they join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance," and, with the only difference that in Shakespeare's play they all melt at the end "into thin air," they enliven the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda just as if these had been a real couple in real London. Such wonders, thinks Ferdinand, "make this place Paradise."—"The banquets were set forth," writes Cavendish in his "Life of Wolsey," "with masks and mummeries, in so gorgeous a sort, and costly manner that it was a heaven to behold."—Needless to say that, at court, allusions to the manifold virtues of the sovereign (whether called Elizabeth or James did not matter), were never spared. Under the various names of "mommeries" and "momons," of "ballets héroïques," "comédies-ballets," and "tragédies-ballets," the French court long enjoyed the equivalent of the "mummeries" and "masques" of the English nobility.¹ Marot had written the verses of a "Mommerie de quatre jeunes demoiselles"; the "Psyché" of Corneille, Molière, and Quinault was a "tragédie-ballet"; Molière introduces a "momon" into "l'Etourdi":

Trufaldin, ouvrez leur pour jouer un momon.

Bacon did not disdain to take "Masques and Triumphs" as the subject of one of his latest essays; he recommends the use of subdued colours for costumes, "white, carnation, and a kinde of sea-water-greene"; there should be perfect concord between words and acting; "dancing in song"

¹ On ancient ballets at the French court, see P. Lacroix, "Ballets et Mascarades de cour," Geneva and Turin, 1868 ff. 6 vols. 12mo.

must be excluded, "for that is a meane and vulgar thing"; in the anti-masque must be centred all the fun and merri-ment. Angels are not to be included in this part of the performance, for the indisputable reason that they are "not comicall enough." Perfumes must be used, "some sweet odours suddenly comming forth . . . are, in such a company as there is steame and heate, things of great pleasure and refreshment."¹

To the category of courtly amusements belong, taken as a whole, the dramatic works written, from 1580, by John Lyly, the Euphuist. Most of his plays, though they are not called so, are scarcely anything else than masques. They were composed to fit circumstances, and they were remarkable for the wit, elegance, and vivacity of their dialogue, unparalleled at that date. The subjects were mostly mythological, and the performers were children. To please a refined audience, the novelist avails himself of the resources of his over-ingenious mind; he mingles with contemporary men the gods and heroes of the past, intersperses the loving words of beautiful Campaspe with the clever speeches of Aristotle and Plato and the sneers of Diogenes, and transfers to Lincolnshire the goddesses of mythology and the shepherds of Virgil's eclogs. He cuts up into dialogues the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, dresses his maidens as boys, and Cupid as a nymph, and strews his plays with allusions, such as could be confessed or denied at will, to the Queen, to Leicester, to Philip of Spain: Diana, Endymion, Midas.² He has sparkling

¹ First published, 1625.

² "Campaspe," written ab. 1580, printed 1584; "Sapho and Phao," printed 1584 (Phao is supposed to be the Duke of Alençon); "Gallathea," registered 1585, printed 1592; "Endimion," performed 1586 (?), printed 1591 (by Endimion is meant Leicester; by Cynthia, Elizabeth); "Midas," written 1589, printed 1592 (Philip II. with his treasure fleets is Midas); "Mother Bombie," written and performed 1590 (?), printed 1594 (a sort of comedy of errors, quite apart in the theatre of Lyly, localised at Rochester;

repartees, and sharp witty ones. Alexander adds a few touches to the portrait of Campaspe, and asks Apelles :
 "How have I done here ?

"*Apelles.* Like a king."¹

If long after Jean de Meun Lyly lends speech to Nature and Discord, long before Marivaux he knows how to use "marivaudage." Cupid being caught by Diana and her nymphs, his wings are clipped, his bow burnt, and he must submit to hard penances :

"*Tellusa.* Come, Cupid, to your taske. First you must undoe all those lovers' knots, because you tyed them.

"*Cupid.* If they be true love knots, 'tis impossible to unknit them ; if false, I never tied them.

"*Eurota.* Make no excuse, but to it.

"*Cupid.* Love-knots are tyed with eyes, and cannot be undone with hands.

.

"*Venus.* Alas, poore boy ! thy winges clipt ? thy brandes quencht ? thy bowe burnt ? and thy arrowes broke ?

"*Cupid.* [Aye], but it skilleth not ! . . . I can wounde with looking, flye with thinking, burne with hearing, shoote with speaking."²

Lyly did not neglect that infallible means of pleasing Elizabeth : the tricks of impudent varlets and the silly deeds of ridiculous constables ; he multiplied songs and dances in his plays, and made of all this an ensemble which had great success at court. He would try also his luck in the city ; one or two of his comedies were performed in

by exception, was not performed at court) ; "The Woman in the Moone," registered 1595, printed 1597 (in blank verse, the only one of Lyly's plays which was not in prose ; the scene is laid in Utopia, among gods and shepherds ; character of the clown) ; "Love's Metamorphosis," pr. 1601 (seems a remodelling of a former version acted ab. 1587). "Complete Works," ed. R. W. Bond, Oxford, 1902, 3 vols., the only good edition ; Lyly's influence on Shakespeare, overestimated. Cf. J. D. Wilson, "Lyly," Cambridge, 1905.

¹ "Alexander and Campaspe," iii. 4.

² "Gallathea," v. 2 ; v. 3.

a real London theatre, but, when removed from their appropriate surroundings, they pleased less; they were really society plays and drawing-room "féeries."

At court, the demand for dramas of this sort was considerable and the honour of having a play chosen for performance was a much envied one. The Master of the Revels, whose power had been continuously increasing and who was supposed to be professionally endowed with "skill of devise, understandinge of historyes, judgement of comedies, tragedyes, and shoves, sight of perspective and architecture, some smacke of geometrye, and other thynges,"¹ had to keep safely, free from dust, moths, and dampness, the mass of dresses, masks, cloths of gold, silver, and silk, belonging to the Crown, to select the plays and to see that they were properly remodelled in order to suit the court. The selection was a difficult matter on account of the number of works proposed: "All whiche vj playes," writes the Master of the Revels in 1571, "being chosen owte of many, and fflownde to be the best that were to be had."² Forty shillings are paid to a play-mender in 1575 for his "reformyng of playes sundry tymes as neede required for her Majestie's lyking."³

The chosen and the disdained, those that never emerged from darkness and those that in the vast stretch of

¹ Memorandum written ab. 1573 for the information of Burghley. The earliest document in which the Master of the Revels appears as such is the patent of March 16, 1544, granted to Thomas Cawarden, "Magister Jocorum, Revelorum et Mascorum omnium et singularium nostrorum vulgariter nuncupatorum Revells and Masks."—E. K. Chambers, "Notes on the History of the Revels Office under the Tudors," London, 1906, pp. 9, 37.

² "Documents relating to the Office of the Revels in the time of Q. Elizabeth," ed. Feuillerat, Louvain, 1908, 4to, p. 145 (Bang's "Materialen," xxi).

³ E. K. Chambers, "Notes," *ibid.* p. 54. From 1579, and for nearly thirty years, the functions of Master of the Revels were filled by Edmund Tilney, a man of parts and reading, to whose duties was added later the licensing of plays and theatres; before being performed the innumerable dramas of the period were shown him in MS., those of Shakespeare among the rest; he licensed the performance, not the printing of plays.—*Ibid.* 56 ff.; below, p. 269.

centuries had their minute of glory, are nearly all lost, and the same night now envelops them all. A few, however, remain besides Lyly's, for instance, the "*Araygnement of Paris*," a mythologico-pastoral compliment to the Queen, in five acts and in verse, the work of George Peele.¹ The plot is a pretext for showing fine costumes, the heroes being nearly all gods and goddesses, for writing graceful poetry, and above all for singing the praises of peerless Elizabeth. Given the title of the play and the place of the performance, we scarcely need explain that the event rehearsed by the author is the reversal of the Trojan shepherd's award, on an appeal by the two goddesses who had *not* received the apple. The court on Olympus (as irreverently handled at times as in the latter-day plays of Meilhac and Halévy) accepts at last the verdict of Diana : Paris had decided wrongly ; the majesty of Juno, the wisdom of Minerva, the beauty of Venus are united in Elizabeth. Venus herself acquiesces, and acknowledges that her son has become blind for having dared to gaze at the Queen. All these compliments had done duty before, but they were none the less compliments, and the eyes of the no longer young ruler sparkled with pleasure.

These courtly amusements were to have later a decisive influence, of a special kind, on public performances : they taught what scenery was. At court, the consideration of expense was quite secondary ; the best craftsmen were resorted to in order to have painted forests, temples, and mountains. The accounts of the Revels show that large

¹ First printed 1584, played some years earlier. "*Works*," ed. Bullen, 1888, vol. i. Born ab. 1558, an Oxford student, M.A. in 1579, George Peele early attracted attention by his poetical gifts and his merry disposition. Verses praising his lost translation of one of Euripides's tragedies mention :

Et tua cum lepidis seria mista jocis.

"*Works*," i. p. xvii. He led in London a notoriously dissipated life, was well known to Greene, Marlowe, and Nash, seems to have been a player as well as a dramatist, and died before 1598. On his principal plays, see pp. 123, 126 ff.

sums were spent on canvas, colours, glue, painters' salaries, in other words, on scenery. Sometimes we know what it represented: a rock, a castle, a church, a prison (in 1573). The Master of the Revels paid for "frames and painted clothes," for "howses of paynted canvas," that is, for pieces of scenery. Quantities of paper were purchased to be turned into leaves and flowers; "paper for patternes leaves of trees . . . for a reame of paper to make counterfeit flowers." Stage money was coined as it has been ever since: "Sylver paper to make money." Natural flowers were purchased in enormous quantities: "Roses 10 bushels . . . strewing herbes and sweete flowers . . . flowers of all sortes . . . gathered in the feeldes . . . wages payd to 214 workfolkes the most of them being women that gathered, bownde and sorted the flowers." Six bushels of "hunny suckels" and thirty-six of roses were purchased on another occasion, with many other flowers, as well as "rose water four gallons," to sprinkle the flowers with and to *oblige* them to be fragrant. With the help of glue, paste, paper, colour, and wooden frames, cleverly handled by the "property maker," a variety of "monsters, beastes, serpents" took shape, very like those that a sailor Academician discovered not long ago in the palace of another Empress, at the other end of the world: old customs such as no country could preserve, except China.¹

¹ "Ce théâtre devait jouer surtout des féeries mythologiques, se passant aux enfers ou chez les dieux, dans les nuages: ce qu'il y a là de monstres, de chimères, de bêtes, de diables en carton ou en papier! . . ." (properties of the private theatre of the Empress of China)—Loti, "Les derniers jours de Pékin," 1902, p. 156. The Master of the Revels, using almost the same words, pays, in 1575, certain sums to John Carow, "property maker," for "monsters, mountaynes, fforestes, beastes, serpentes . . . armor counterfet . . . heaven, hell, and the devell."—Feuillerat, "Documents relating to the Revels," 241.

The evolution from the liturgical drama to the heroic tragedy and realistic comedy is so much in the nature of things that it occurred in China too, at a very remote period: "L'évolution du théâtre chinois fut logique. Peu à peu,

Under James I. the splendour of these festivities increased still more. Many of the occasional dramas written then to order, by Daniel, Campion, or Ben Jonson have come down to us, and they count among their best works. Painting and machinery had improved as well as verse. If the King could not rival Pope Leo X., who had the "Suppositi" of Ariosto performed in Rome, the scenery being the work of Raphael, he had at least Inigo Jones, the architect, draughtsman and machinist, who had studied abroad, and who knew how to transform at will a palace into a hovel, a flower garden into a Lybian desert. An eye-witness's account of a play performed before James in the hall of Christ Church at Oxford, in 1605, shows, however, that these wonders could be, after all, the result of very simple magic: "The stage was built close to the upper end of the Hall . . . and adorned with stately pillars, which pillars would turn about, by reason whereof, with the help of other painted clothes, their stage did vary three times in the acting of one tragedy."¹ This device,

sur la scène, les demi-dieux légendaires furent remplacés par des héros ayant vécu réellement. . . . Ce fut la naissance de la tragédie: de longs monologues en vers, de pompeuses déclamations alternaient avec les chœurs. Puis, l'évolution continuant . . . les empereurs et les princes furent suivis des mandarins civils et militaires, et ces derniers amenèrent eux-mêmes leur cortège de bacheliers, de médecins, de gros commerçants. Enfin le peuple lui-même, laboureurs et artisans, apparut à son tour sur la scène. L'évolution était terminée. . . . Au treizième siècle de notre ère, les auteurs chinois avaient déjà abordé tous les genres."—Charles Pettit, in *Le Temps*, August 13, 1906. The performances in courtyards, the status of strolling and other players offer also curious resemblances.

¹ "The preparation at Oxford in August, 1605," Nichols "Progresses . . . of King James," London, 1828, 4 vols., 4to, vol. i. p. 538. Several plays were performed during the King's stay: "Alba," which displeased the Queen and the ladies, on account of there being in it "five or six men almost naked"; "Vertumnus," "very well and learnedly penned by Dr. Gwynn," and which put the King to sleep; and a pastoral "drawn out of Fidus Pastor" by Samuel Daniel, and which was "well acted and greatly applauded." When a play had been performed in the hall of the same college before Elizabeth in 1566, there had been only fixed scenery: "Ex

intermediary between scene-shifting and "simultaneous scenery," was well known on the Continent, and had been used at Nantes in 1596 for the performance of "*L'Arimène ou Berger désespéré*," the turning pillars being on that occasion pentagons, whose five faces, showing different sights, allowed as many changes.¹ Inigo Jones had in this case invented little enough, and when he produced his bill, amounting to £50, there were some protests.² These wonders, reserved at first for royal feasts, were commonly offered after the Restoration to the public of ordinary theatres; and the result was what it will ever be, great expense for the managers, great distress for the players, and a lowering of dramatic art, the success depending more upon the scene-shifter than upon the poet. The wiser judges saw, even then, the danger and denounced it, but in vain: "It is an argument of the worth of the plays and actors of the last age . . ." wrote one in 1699, looking back to the days of Shakespeare, "to consider that they could support themselves merely from their

utroque scenæ latere comœdis ac personatis magnifica palatia ædesque apparatissimæ extruuntur." See John Bereblock's "*Commentarii de Rebus gestis Oxoniæ, ibidem commorante Elizabetha regina*," in Plummer, "*Elizabethan Oxford*," 1887, p. 124.

¹ Preface of "*L'Arimène ou Berger désespéré, pastorale par Ollenix du Mont-Sacré*" (anagram of Nicolas de Montreux), Paris, 1597, 12mo. The play had been performed on February 25, 1596, in the great hall of the castle at Nantes, before the Duke de Mercœur, governor of the town: "*Le Théâtre fut sans défaut eslevé dans la salle du chasteau de Nantes . . . la perspective parfaicte, et les faces agréables en quatre pentagones dont chacun en portoit cinq diverses, qui paraissoient en ceste diversité selon la diversité des actes et des Intermèdes. Et ces quatre corps se mouvoyent en mesme temps par une seule vis qui sous le théâtre estoit facilement tournée. Entre les Pentagonnes estoient les sorties des acteurs.*" On "*décors simultanés*," with examples of them reproduced in facsimile, see "*Shakespeare in France*," pp. xiii, xiv, 71, 75.

² "They also hired one Mr. Jones, a great Traveller, who undertooke to further them much, and furnish them with rare devices, but performed very little to that which was expected. He had for his pains, as I had it constantly reported, £50." "*The Preparation*," Nichols, *ibid.* p. 558.

own merit, the weight of the matter and goodness of the action, without scenes and machines, whereas the present plays, with all that show, can hardly draw an audience."¹

Like the continental countries England had her farces, the cleverest of which, by John Heywood, the friend of More, seem at times tales of Chaucer's turned into dialogues, or rather imitations or duplicates of the early French *fabliaux* and satirical plays. They are as witty and merry as their prototypes, and like the French ones have no other aim than to raise a laugh, at the expense of the friar, of the pardoner and his sham relics, the quack and his sham remedies, the silly husband or the irrepressible wife.² England also attempted real comedy reproducing with picturesque accuracy scenes of every day life, "Gammer Gurton's Needle" being the best of the kind;³ learned plays too, either comedies or tragedies, usually performed before select audiences at the Universities, the

¹ "Historia Histrionica . . . in a Dialogue of Plays," by James Wright, the antiquary, 1699, in Dodsley's "Old Plays," ed. Hazlitt, vol. xv. When the public has once acquired a taste for merely spectacular plays, there is no stopping; in the same period dances had been added to "Macbeth," to render it acceptable to any Mr. Pepys who might see it—with full success, as Mr. Pepys pronounced it "a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertisements," January 7, 166[7].

² "The Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and neybour Pratte," 1533, written before 1531 (cf. "Farce d'un Pardonneur, d'un Triacleur et d'une Tavernière," in "Ancien Théâtre Français," 1854, ff. ii.); "A mery play between Johanjohan the husbande, Tyb his wife and syr Jehan the Preest," 1533, in Gayley's "Representative Comedies" (cf. "La Farce de Pernet," *ibid.* vol. i.; see "Théâtre en Angleterre," 1878, 169 ff.); "The Foure P.," 1545(?), in Manly's "Specimens." By the same, several moralities of the usual type; a Catholic, he died in exile at Malines, ab. 1577. "Dramatic Writings," 1905, "Proverbs, Epigrams and Miscellanies," 1906, ed. J. S. Farmer. Cf. the famous "Secunda Pastorum," above, vol. I. p. 487.

³ "Gammer Gurton's nedle . . . made by Mr. S. Mr. of Arts," printed 1575, written long before; wrongly attributed to Still, Bishop of Bath (see my "Théâtre en Angleterre," p. 180), and now supposed to be the work of W. Stevenson: see H. Bradley, in "Representative English Comedies," ed. Gayley, 1903, p. 197. The demonstration is not however entirely convincing and the authorship remains somewhat doubtful.

Inns of Court, or the Queen's palace, the three main centres where classical tastes predominated.¹ In these works of scholarly authors reappear, in England as in France, the ready-made characters of ancient comedy : the braggart, the parasite, the servant from Plautus ;² in serious dramas, heroes after the Senecan pattern rise above the common herd, defy fate, suffer tragical misfortunes, and pour forth undaunted their grandiloquent oratory.

The Renaissance had given Seneca an incredible popularity. Belonging as he did to the period of Roman decadence and yet a classic, he thus happened to be nearer to the moderns than the generality of accepted models ; he had the tone of a teacher, and men had a passion then for being taught : tragedy and comedy, wrote Ronsard, must be, above all, "*didascaliques et enseignantes*."³ Seneca was the most widely imitated of all the ancients. He had an immense influence in France, a lesser though a notable one in England. His tragedies were translated, one after the other, into English from 1559 to 1581 ;⁴ his

¹ Without speaking of the plays separately mentioned below, the titles occurring in the "Documents relating to the Revels," ed. Feuillerat, 1908, point to a large percentage of dramas on classical subjects being performed at court : "Quint fñabi (Fabius?), Toolie (Tullius or Tullia), The historye of Mutius Scevola, Cariclia, Cipio African, Pompey, Alkmeon," etc.

² Characters of Roister the braggart, and Merrygreeke the parasite in "Ralph Roister," by the learned Nicholas Udall (Shakesp. Soc. 1841, and Arber's reprints), performed by his pupils at Westminster (?) about the middle of the century, or shortly after (by him also some pageants, on which see Flügel, in "Furnivall Miscellany," p. 81) ; character of Ragan, the cunning slave, in the "Historie of Jacob and Esau," 1568 (a remarkable play, written before 1557 ; the subject was a popular one ; cf. "Esau le Chasseur," by Behourt, Rouen, 1599) ; imitation of Plautus's "Amphitruo" in "A new Enterlued . . . named Jacke Jugeler," 1563, a shortened and feeble imitation, it is Plautus's play without Amphitruo.

³ "Préface sur la Franciade, touchant le poème héroïque."

⁴ "The sixt Tragedie of the most grave and prudent author L. A. Seneca, entituled Troas . . . in Englyshe, by Jasper Heywood" (son of John, the author of farces), London, 1559. Heywood takes liberties and adds embellishments of his making, but he is careful to say so : the play was translated

general ideas, his maxims, his solemn, and at times truly eloquent speeches thus became accessible to all ; traces of them are to be found nearly everywhere, for he had treated of many subjects and meditated on many problems, including, long before Hamlet, the question of "to be or not to be" :

May thys be true or doth the fable fayne,
 When corps is dead the sprite to live as yet? . .
 When in the tombe, our ashes once be set,
 Hath not the soule likewise his funerall? .
 . Doth all at once together dye?
 And may no part his fatall howre delay,
 But with the breath the soule from hence doth flie,
 Amid the cloudes to vanish quite away?¹

Sometimes the characters in his plays reappeared on the English stage ; sometimes national heroes, lovers from Boccaccio, prophets from the Bible, Asiatic princes, imitating his style, exchanged, in English plays, noble orations or brief aphorisms, observed, as well as they could, the rule of the unities, and slipped in due time behind the arras, there to be slaughtered, and procure for a learned audience the pleasure of hearing the report of classical Nuntius and the sententious communings of a chorus "à l'antique."

"Our youths longed to ascend the stage," wrote Nicholas Grimald, from the College of Merton in 1543, and he composed for them a Latin "tragica-comœdia" on the Resurrection (with Alecto playing a part), and he justified, by the example of Plautus, some few liberties taken with the

"with divers and sundrye addicions." The ten tragedies were successively turned into English by Heywood, Studley and others, and then published complete in one volume : "Seneca his tenne Tragedies," 1581. Concerning "The influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy," see the brief and substantial essay of J. W. Cunliffe, London, 1893.

¹ "The sixt tragedie . . . entituled Troas ;" chorus of act ii.

unities.¹ At Cambridge, Thomas Legge obtained in 1579 great success with a "Richardus Tertius," written after the manner of Seneca.² Again and again, in one or the other language, others did the same. At the Inns of Court, Gascoigne gave a "Jocasta" in English blank verse, imitated from Dolce, who had imitated Seneca, who had imitated Euripides, who had imitated Æschylus. There we find in complete array chorus, messengers, and confidants:

O faithfull servaunt of mine auncient sire,
Though unto thee sufficiently be knowne
The whole discourse of my recurelesse grieve. . .
Yet . . .

Yet, I shall tell it all over again, for if it is sufficiently known to thee, it is not to this audience. Jocasta does not give this reason, but it is the true one; thus begins the play.³ To other scholarly writers the nation's history

* Performed, he says, before an "eruditissimorum virorum corona," who, if really such, could not presumably much admire the poetry of lines such as this:

Nemo homo potuit melius consilium dare.

"Christus Redivivus," Cologne, 1543, reprinted by J. M. Hart, "Modern Language Association of America," vol. xiv. The well-known "Pedantius," probably by E. Forsett, was also a University play, performed at Trinity College, Cambridge, in Feb. 1581, Harvey being, as it seems, caricatured as the hero of this Latin comedy; ed. C. Moore Smith, 1905, vol. viii. of Bang's "Materialen," 1st ed., 1631. A "Christus Triumphans" by Foxe the martyrologist, 1556, was translated into French, 1562, and into English, 1578. The best Latin dramas of the period were written by the Scotchman, Buchanan, but in France, and for a French public: "Jephthes sive votum," Paris, 1554, "Baptistes sive calumnia," a "Medea," an "Alcestis," all of them performed at the "Collège de Guyenne," Bordeaux. A Latin "Victoria," dedicated to Philip Sidney by Abraham Fraunce, has recently been recovered and edited by G. C. Moore Smith (Louvain, vol. xiv. of Bang's "Materialen"). Cf. "Notes on some English University Plays," by the same, *Modern Language Review*, III. 141 and see Keller, *ibid.* 177 ff.

² Text in Hazlitt, "Shakespeare's Library," vol. v.

³ Acts i. and iv. by Kinwelmersh; the rest by Gascoigne: "Jocasta," 1566, printed 1572, in blank verse (except the choruses). Dumb shows introduce each act: "Firste . . . a king with an Imperial crown uppon his head . . . a Mounde with a crosse in his lefte hande . . . sitting in a chariote . . . drawne

supplied the subject of "Gorboduc"; mediæval romances, the plot of the "Misfortunes of Arthur"¹; the Decameron, the story of "Tancred and Gismund"²; all of them written according to the classical standard, and performed before Elizabeth. "Gorboduc," the work of Sackville and Norton, and the earliest English tragedy in blank verse was represented at Whitehall on the 18th of January, 156[2].³ It pleased connoisseurs by the imitation of the ancients and the dignity of the speeches; critics declared it a masterpiece or almost; England had at last her Jodelle, perhaps even her Seneca; alone among all the dramas of his day, this one found grace in the eyes of Sir Philip Sidney, as "clyming to the height of Seneca his stile."

Even at the time of Shakespeare's greatest popularity, the classical drama continued to have staunch partisans. Daniel composed, after Seneca's recipes, a "Cleopatra" beginning with a monologue which filled the whole of

in by foure Kinges"—an example for Tamburlaine—and by this cross and all the rest "Sesostris, King of Egypt" was to be known. By Gascoigne, a masque (below, p. 196), a morality mixed with comedy, "The Glasse of Government," 1575, a prose comedy, "The Supposes," performed at Gray's Inn, in 1566, a sort of comedy of errors and "jeux de l'amour et du hasard," adapted from Ariosto's famous "Suppositi," first acted 1509 and a play more celebrated for its merriment than for its ethical worth. "Works" of Gascoigne, ed. Hazlitt, 1869, 2 vols. 4to; "Complete Works," ed. J. W. Cunliffe, Cambridge, 1907, 2 vols. 8vo; "Supposes and Jocasta" (with Dolce's Italian text), ed. J. W. Cunliffe, Boston, 1906. Cf. above, vol. II. pp. 357, 426.

¹ "Certaine Devises and Shewes," London, 1587, usually called "The Misfortunes of Arthur"; principal author, T. Hughes.

² "The Tragedie of Tancred and Gismund, compiled by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple . . . newly revived and polished according to the decorum of these daies [*i.e.*, turned into blank verse] by R. W[ilmot]," 1591, first performed before Elizabeth in 1568; from Boccaccio, "Decameron," Nov. 1, Giornata iv.

³ "The Tragedie of Gorboduc, where of three actes were wrytten by Thomas Nortone, and the two laste by Thomas Sackvyle," London, 1565; reprinted by Miss L. T. Smith, Heilbronn, 1883. On Sackville, see above, vol. II. p. 332.

Act I., and ending with a messenger's report nine pages long.¹ In the same way as Jodelle in his "*Cléopâtre Captive*," he was obliged, on account of the unities, to begin his tragedy very near the catastrophe and to dilute, in his five acts, matter considered by Shakespeare insufficient for one: the first scene of the first act both in Daniel and Jodelle corresponds to Scene 2 of Act V. in Shakespeare. At the same time, the "*Marc Antoine*" of Garnier, another French classical dramatist, was translated into English verse by the Countess of Pembroke²; the "*Cornélie*" of the same was turned into English by Kyd³; Brandon wrote a "*Virtuous Octavia*"⁴; Fulke Greville, the friend of Sidney, curbed to classical rules and decked with messengers, nurses, choruses and ghosts, the Oriental subjects of "*Mustapha*" and "*Alaham*"⁵; Sir William Alexander cut up ancient history into tragedies: "*Darius*,"

¹ "*The Tragedie of Cleopatra*," 1594. By the same, "*The Tragedie of Philotas*," 1605. The dedications in verse of these two plays are among Daniel's best work. "*Complete Works*," ed. Grosart, vol. iii.

² "*The Tragedie of Antonie*," London, 1595, 4to, a pretty volume, elegantly printed on fine paper, with a care never bestowed on any of the romantic dramas of the period.

³ His efforts to translate accurately, though far from always successful, are worthy of note. See for example the flowery speech of the messenger relating, in characteristic fashion, the final catastrophe:

Tout s'épand par les champs, comme un camp mesnager
De caverneux fourmis, venus pour fourrager,
Lors que l'hiver prochain ses froidures appreste,
Ils sortent de leur creux . . .

"*Cornélie*," 1st ed. 1573; "*Œuvres*," ed. Foerster, Heilbronn, 1882.

The fields are spread, and as a household campe
Of creeping emmets in a countrey farme,
That come to forrage when the cold begins,
Leaving theyr crannyes, etc.

"*Cornelia*," 1594; "*Works*," ed. Boas, Oxford, 1901, p. 150.

⁴ "*The Tragi-comœdi of the Virtuous Octavia*," 1598, 12mo.

⁵ "*Works in Verse and Prose*," ed. Grosart, vol. iii.; 1st ed. of "*Mustapha*," 1609; of "*Alaham*," 1633.

"Cræsus," etc.,¹ filling, he too, a whole act with a monologue of Solon's or with the lugubrious disquisitions of Alexander's ghost. More or less visible, rill, rivulet, or river, classical tradition persisted, and may be traced from the time of the early Tudors to the days when it reigned supreme with the last of the Stuarts.

In the history of the English drama, at this period, a fact deserves special attention, and is indeed of paramount importance. At the same moment, in France and in England, those best entitled to speak uttered, in both countries, the same precepts. The cleverest critics, the most learned and experienced scholars, the thinkers of greatest fame, pronounced on the question of the neo-classicism adapted from the ancients, as opposed to the lawless romanticism inherited from the Middle Ages. In the two countries, with the same energy, but widely different results, they declared for classical art.

Tragedy, wrote in 1572 Jean de la Taille, one of the best known French theoreticians and dramatists, "is a sort and kind of poetry not vulgar, but as elegant, beautiful, and excellent as may be. Its appropriate subject deals only with pitiful catastrophes of the great, with the inconstancy of Fortune, banishments, wars, plagues, famines . . . that is, always extreme misery and not things which happen every day, naturally and according to reason, as to die a natural death, or to be killed by one's foe." What more natural and according to reason than to be killed by one's foe? Nothing, in those days. Such commonplace occurrences could not excite much interest (a noteworthy declaration explaining the preternaturally black deeds so often recorded by Shakespeare and his contemporaries); but a good sub-

¹ "Foure Monarchicke Tragedies," in "Recreations with the Muses" by "William [Alexander] Earle of Sterline," London, 1637, fol. ; 1st editions, 1603-7. The tragedies of Daniel, Fulke Greville and Alexander were never put on the stage.

ject would be, for example, the story of one "who would be made to eat unfortunately his own sons." What is usual, what we constantly see and know about must be excluded. As we have to stir a public that is refined or should be so, while the events will be extraordinary and therefore stirring, the gruesome side of them will be concealed from view ; we must cause heart-beats by our words and the thoughts they express, not by that too easy means, the sight of blood and tortures. Murders shall therefore be accomplished behind the scenes ; there shall be a chorus ; the unities shall be observed : "un mesme jour . . . un mesme lieu." And as the time allowed will be so short, we must refrain from giving a whole story as the vulgar sort of dramatists do, in their lawlessness : "You must not begin your tragedy at the beginning of the story or subject, but towards the middle or near the end (which is one of the principal secrets of the art we speak of), according to the example of the best ancient poets." All other kinds of tragedies, comedies, farces and moralities, written without proper attention to the "true art," can only be clumsy things, unworthy of attention, "fit to serve as pastime for varlets and the common people, not for grave persons." ¹

¹ "La tragédie donc est une espèce et un genre de poésie non vulgaire, mais autant élégant, beau et excellent qu'il est possible. Son vray subject ne traicte que de piteuses ruines de grands seigneurs, que des inconstances de Fortune, que bannissemens, guerres, famines . . . et bref que larmes et misères extrêmes et non point de choses qui arrivent tous les jours, naturellement et par raison commune, comme d'un qui mourroit de sa propre mort [ou] d'un qui seroit tué de son ennemi. . . . Il faut toujours représenter l'histoire ou le jeu en un mesme jour, en un mesme temps et en un mesme lieu ; aussi se garder de ne faire chose sur la scène qui ne s'y puisse commodément et honnestement faire, comme de n'y faire exécuter des meurtres. . . . Il fault qu'il y ait un chœur." The dramatist must take care "de ne commencer à déduire sa tragédie par le commencement de l'histoire ou du subject, ains vers le milieu ou la fin (ce qui est un des principaux secrets de l'art dont je vous parle) à la mode des meilleurs poètes vieux. . . . Autant de tragédies et comédies, de farces et moralitez (où bien souvent n'y a sens ny raison, mais des paroles ridicules avec

Same phenomenon in England. Sidney, so popular, the object of universal admiration, propagated the very same ideas; he pronounced in favour of Aristotle's rules, including the rule of the twenty-four hours: "The stage should alwaies represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day." "*Gorboduc*" won his suffrage, not however without some reserves, because the sacro-sanct rules were not rigorously observed, and it cannot therefore "remaine as an exact model of all tragedies." Owing to these rules, dramatists must not "beginne *ab ovo*; but they must come to the principall poynt of that one action which they wil represent." Many events will take place behind the scenes and we shall hear of them through "some *Nuncius*." Shame on those plays which "be neither right tragedies nor right comedies."¹ The Latin dramas of Buchanan were Sidney's ideal; there perfection is to be found; they "doe justly bring forth a divine admiration." The great thinker of the period, Bacon, condescended once to take some part in the composition of a drama: the play was a classical tragedy, "*The Misfortunes of Arthur*." The most learned and illustrious of dramatists, Ben Jonson, whose voice was immeasurably more powerful and authoritative than Shakespeare's, proclaimed himself a partisan of Antiquity and of her rules; he caused the death of his *Sejanus* to be only heard of, not seen, a messenger relating the event; and he explained that, if he had taken some few liberties and failed

quelque badinage) et autres jeux qui ne sont faicts selon le vray art et au moule des vieux . . . ne peuvent estre que choses ignorantes, malfaites, indignes d'en faire cas, et qui ne deussent servir de passetemps qu'aux varlets et menu populaire et non aux personnes graves."—"Saul le furieux, tragédie prise de la Bible, faicte selon l'art et à la mode des vieux Autheurs tragiques," preceded by a treatise (strongly influenced by Scaliger), "*De l'art de la Tragédie*," Paris, 1572, 8vo.

¹ "Apologie for Poetrie," 1595, written ab. 1581; above, vol. II. pp. 365 ff.

"to observe the old state and splendor of dramatic poems," the fault lay with "our times, and such auditors as commonly things are presented [to]." A series of three short Christmas plays was performed at Cambridge in 1599-1601, and, under pretext of a "Pilgrimage to Parnassus," treated of the state of letters under Elizabeth. These plays offer a criticism, in many places very witty, of contemporary poetry; Jonson himself, on account of his excessive realism, does not escape raillery; but the main subject of the satire is the most conspicuous representative of romantic freedom, Shakespeare in person, "sweet Mr. Shakespeare," whose praise is unceasingly rehearsed by the representative in the play of pretentious stupidity: "I'll have his picture in my study!"¹ Many, who were not silly Gullios, have experienced since the same desire.

English literary critics were thus unanimous in their defence of classical art. The Renaissance had extended her teachings to the great island and caused Latin ideals to be accepted by connoisseurs and men of learning; not only were they as staunch in their faith as the French, but their unanimity was even more complete; feeling that their task was such an arduous one, they stood the more closely together. It would be difficult to find in England a plea for freedom at all comparable to that written by Ogier as a preface for the "Tyr et Sidon" of his friend Schélandre; one may say with perfect truth, strange as it may seem, that the only defence of Shakespearian art written at an early period by a theorician, in the name of principles and of reason, is that of a Frenchman, Ogier, who had never heard of Shakespeare. Ogier, in his account of dramatic art, and Schélandre in the specimen he gives of it, cast off the unities, proscribe messengers,

¹ "The Pilgrimage to Parnassus, with the two parts of the Return from Parnassus, 1597-1601," ed. Macray, Oxford, 1886, 8vo, p. 58. Mr. Hales has shown that 1599, not 1597, was the true date, *Academy*, March 19, 1887.

and mingle the comic and tragic elements, low scenes and bursts of lyricism¹; to keep the ones and the others apart, is "to ignore the conditions of the life of men, whose days and hours are oftentimes interspersed with laughter and tears, pleasure and sorrow." The unity of time obliges classical authors to "introduce at every turn a messenger to inform us of what has taken place before." These messengers "cause the hearers to lose patience . . . Much fitter is it for a renowned inn than for an excellent tragedy to be thus frequented by an abundance of messengers."² No English theorician lent thus to Shakespeare the help of his critical acumen and eloquence;³

¹ So truly Shakespearian at times as to suggest an impossible imitation. Compare for example the lines of Lorenzo, showing Jessica :

how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold

("Merchant," v. 1), and Léonte's apostrophe :

Gentils globes de feu brillants à mille pointes . . .
Chers joyaux dont la nuit pare son voile sombre
D'un mélange subtil de lumière dans l'ombre,
Beaux caractères d'or, etc.

² "Tyr et Sidon, tragi-comédie," re-written and the preface added, 1628 ("Ancien Théâtre Français," vol. viii.) ; first version, as a classical tragedy, 1608 (ed. Haraszti, Paris, 1908). Schélandre presents to his spectators, in 1628, a battle, a ball, a ship, the executioner and his block. He is not lacking either in a truly Shakespearian fondness for puns :

O mer, amère mère de la mère d'Amour !
(2nd day, iv. 3.)

On such attempts, see "Shakespeare in France," chap. ii.

³ M. Symmes thinks he may point to Webster as being an early and unique advocate of the romantic drama, "Débuts de la Critique dramatique en Angleterre," 1903, p. 197. But the passage referred to does not bear the interpretation put upon it. Webster does nothing there (preface of the "White Divel," 1612) but plead guilty, and claim the benefit of extenuating circumstances. What would be the good, he says, of writing some "sententious tragedy . . . observing all the critical laws, as height of style and gravity of person," when "the breath that comes from the incapable multitude is able to poison it?" This is surely to plead without warmth for the multitude and its tastes.

and yet the art of Shakespeare triumphed in England, and the art of Schélandre died in France.

The principal cause of these opposite results of similar teachings given in both countries by equally authorised critics, is the difference in the two peoples' genius, disposition and temper. At the playhouse, the verdict is rendered by the multitude ; its judgment can be influenced but not reversed ; the national tendencies, the real tastes and preferences of the crowd, reappear in the end, and usually carry the day. They are better discerned there than elsewhere, and have far greater weight in deciding the fate of plays than the fine words, the cabals and plottings of learned critics or fashionable theatre-goers. In France, as soon as the rules were once enunciated, the multitude submitted to them with alacrity ; their logic and simplicity, the difficult art of choosing which their observance made compulsory—choosing of a few personages, of striking incidents, of a supreme crisis—appealed at once to the French mind, one of its most salient traits being thus put in full light. Even without genius, and only with rules, by showing an artist's and a logician's capacity for choosing, an author could please ; and please not merely men of learning, but the very multitude. Mairét had no genius ; his tragedy of "Sophonisbe" carried all before it, for no other reason than that it followed the rules ; it was a revelation ; this was the sort of art which had long been sought for and expected, of which the Jodelles and the Garniers, still full of incongruities, had given only rough samples ; the play, first acted in 1634,¹ kept the stage thirty years, and was praised by Corneille himself, then at the height of his fame.

The reverse happened in London. The teaching of scholars fell there on dry ground ; those Greeks, those

¹ On Mairét's "Sophonisbe" and all the other Sophonisbes, see C. Ricci, "Sophonisbe dans la tragédie classique italienne et Française," Turin, 1904.

Romans, those Aristotles and Senecas, remained, in spite of the Renaissance, foreign people in the eyes of the many. Englishmen looked at them with curiosity, but they did not acknowledge them as kinsmen, or ancestors. Their art was looked upon as a singularity; the crowd took little interest in it, and the crowd's opinion was the more important that its passion for theatrical performances was becoming irrepressible. The common people were about to fill, day after day, as many play-houses in London alone as there were, at the same period, in all the capitals of Europe put together. The multitude it was that paid its money and filled the precincts; its desires were the ones to be obeyed; its tastes the ones to be flattered. The only chance for the English drama to develop fully was to submit to the will of these variety-loving audiences, fond of surprises and adventures, of glaring colours and strong condiments. The public on whom Shakespeare's success depended was this same vulgar public, so powerful and self-willed that Jonson himself, testy and obstinate as he was, and proud of his learning, Jonson who complained that "Shakspeer wanted arte," would have to yield; he would make concessions though ashamed of making them, but must, as there was no other means for him to keep an audience.

In England the "Cleopatra" of Daniel remained a curiosity; in France, the "Tyr et Sidon" of Schélandre.

II.

Companies of actors giving performances in London and in the provinces were numerous from the first part of the sixteenth century. Even in the fifteenth, players had begun largely to replace the minstrels forming part of noblemen's households. But the tie between the nobleman and his players was soon loosened; and while minstrels

had been, and still continued to be in certain families, salaried servants, players came to be only nominally their patron's men.¹ This greatly helped towards the diffusion of the drama. Much more than the others, such troupes were *bound* to go about, "to live at the devotion or almes of other men," censors said, "passing from countrie to countrie, from one gentleman's house to another, offering their service, which is a kind of beggerie."²

England in this again did not differ from other lands: such troupes existed in all the countries strongly influenced by the Renaissance, France, Italy, Spain. Some were attached to the persons of such great people as the Earl of Sussex, or Thomas Cromwell, or the King himself; others, "sans aveu," formed and dissolved according to circumstances, cast discredit on dramatic art by their misbehaviour and incurred periodically the harsh penalties provided by the laws of the time. Henry VIII., remembering that "ydlenes [is] the mother and roote of all mischiefes," that "detestable vices and fashions" are "commonly used at the Banke [Bankside], and such like naughtie places," decided, in 1545, to provide employment for "all such ruffyns, vagabonds, masterles men, comon

¹ The change from minstrels to players is well shown in certain books of accounts: "1453. To the Mynstrallis of my lord Bourghcher . . . 5s. 2d.—1469 . . . Lusoribus domini comitis Essex ludentibus coram burgensibus infra burgum hoc anno vs. Et solut. istoribus [histrionibus] domine Regine Anglie venientibus ad ballivos, hoc anno, iis. . . . Et datum lusoribus ejusdem comitis ad domum frumenti [corn market] ludentibus, hoc anno, iiiis. et in potu, iiid.—. . . 1540. Item in money geven that yere to my lord of Sussex players . . . 14d.—Item in money gevyne to my lord Cromewellis players . . . 16d.—. . . 1546. iis. geven to the Queen's players. . . —1547. 3s. 4d. to the King's players . . . 2s. 8d. to the King's mynstrells—. . . 1552. 5s. 2d. geven to my lord Marques of Northampton's players."—"Maldon Records and the Drama," by A. Clark; *Notes and Queries*, March 9, June 1, 1907, pp. 181, 422.

² "A second and third Blast of retrait from Plaies . . . by Anglo-phile Eutheo," 1580, reprinted in Hazlitt, "The English Drama and Stage," 1869, 4to, p. 134.

players and evill disposed persons." The employment would consist in serving his Majesty "in certain gallies and other like vessells."¹ Elizabeth ordered that "rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars" be "grievously whipped"; that they be "stripped naked from the middle upwards; and be openly whipped until his or her body be bloody," explaining that, by these same rogues, etc., must be understood "all fencers, bearwards, common players in interludes and minstrels." Exception is made in 1572, and renewed in 1597, for those, "belonging to any baron of this realme or any other personage of greater degree," who are "auctoryzed to play, under the hand and seale of armes of such baron or personage."² Mediæval ordinances had made similar exemptions for "*chiens gentils*," dogs belonging to gentle people; they were allowed to go about freely.³

The first care of a troupe in process of formation was therefore to secure, as its protector, some "baron of the realm," and it found one, as a rule, very easily. The nobleman incurred usually neither trouble nor expense; he allowed the troupe to bear his name, and the players to be known as his "men" or "servants"; he gave them a letter which was their passport and safeguard. A fashionable peer would have his actors, and he would occasionally reprimand authorities so bold as to interfere with their performances under pretence of morality, hygiene, or public safety. "Sir, I am geven to understand that you have forbidden the companye of players that call themselves myne the exercise of their playes; I pray you to forbear any such course against them, and seeing they have my license, to suffer them to continue

¹ Hazlitt, "The English Drama and Stage," 1869, p. 6.

² 14 Eliz. ch. v.; 39-40 Eliz. ch. iv.; Prothero, "Select Statutes," pp. 68, 101; Hazlitt, *ibid.* p. 38.

³ "*Liber Albus*," ed. Riley, "Rolls," 1859, p. 453.

the use of their playes. . . . And so I bidd you hartely farewell." So wrote the Duke of Lennox "to all Maiors, Justeses of peas, Shreefes," etc., of the realm, in 1604.¹

A most instructive and amusing comedy has come down to us, and allows us to follow, from its birth to its catastrophe, one of those second-rate companies which overran the country, composed of craftsmen tired of their craft, patronised by a nobleman of doubtful nobility and even uncertain existence,² and accompanied by their poet, a poor fellow with no talent, but able to improvise at need a dialogue, a prologue, a scene and even a whole play. The first thing for them is to choose the indispensable patron :

But whose men are we all this while?—

—Whose, but the merry knight's, Sir Oliver Owlet's?

There was never a better man to players.³

¹ "Henslowe Papers," ed. Greg, 1907, p. 62. At such interventions, censors were indignant: "Alas that private affection should so raigne in the nobilitie that to pleasure, as they thinke, their servants, and to uphold them in their vanitie, they should restraine the magistrates from executting their office! What credite can returne to the noble to countenance his men to exercise that qualitie which is not sufferable in anie common-weale?"—"A second and third Blast of retrait from Plaies," by Anglo-phile Eutheo, 1580, in Hazlitt, "English Drama and Stage," p. 133.

² In "Ratseis Ghoaste," entered 1605, the hero, a highwayman, meets a company of strolling players and cautions them against such doings: "Abuse not honorable personages in using their names and countenance without their consent and privitie; and because you are now destitute of a maister, I will give you leave to play under my protection for a sennights space" (in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," 1898, i. p. 326). All these practices were imitated from minstrels by players, their continuators: see Edward IV.'s charter condemning those "workmen of different trades" who give themselves for the King's minstrels and are so bold as to wear his livery; "English Wayfaring Life," p. 202.

³ "Histrio-Mastix or the Player Whipt, printed for Th. Thorpe," 1610, reprinted by Simpson in his so-called "School of Shakspere," 1878, 2 vols. vol. ii. Though some allusions, most likely inserted later, refer to Jacobean times, the general tone and the main facts certainly point to a much earlier date, probably the first part of Elizabeth's reign. What seems to be a direct allusion to this play (which has been for no convincing reasons

During the greater part of the century, such troupes played where they could: in castle halls, where, like the jugglers and minstrels of old, they were always welcome; in town halls or on public squares, in tennis courts, barns and inn yards. Sir Oliver Owlet's players go about the provinces, and one of them, ascending the steps of the cross on the market place, announces the intended performance:

Come to the towne-house and see a play;
At three a clocke it shall beginne,
The finest play that ever was seene.
Yet there is one thing more in my minde:
Take heed you leave not your purses behinde.

When all is settled, however, the lord of the place sends his steward to the players, and the temptation is too great for them to resist.

"*Steward.* My maisters, my lord Mavortius is disposed to hear what you can do.

"*Belch.* What! fellows, shall we refuse the town play?

"*Post Haste* (the poet). Why, his reward is worth the mayor and all the town.

"*Omnes.* Weele make him merry i'faith; weele be there."

They go indeed, and before treating their audience to the performance of a ridiculous "*Troilus and Cressida*" (which makes an Italian nobleman, the guest of the castle, sick with disgust), they describe in a song the fate of itinerant players:

. . . We that travel, with pumps full of gravell,
Made all of such running leather
That once in a week, new masters we seek,
And never can hold together.

attributed to Marston) is to be found in Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humour," printed 1600: "As you may read in Plato's *Histrion-Mastix*," iii. i, l. 2098 of Bang and Greg's reprint. The play is a strange mixture of excellent scenes from real life and of dull ones in the style of the old moralities, with Plenty, daughter of Peace, Fortitude, Religion, etc.

Their "Comical Romance" ends in misfortune; incapable of resuming their former trades ("Fall to work after playing? impossible"), unprotected by Owlet, they are pressed, sent to the wars, shipped off, and the soldiery derides them. Is this you who looked so great,

Upon a stage, and now march like a drown'd rat;
Look up and play the Tamburlaine, you rogue, you!

Inn yards were for actors, in early days, ready-made theatres; these places were surrounded with galleries giving access to the bedrooms; from thence the more privileged could see the play; others stood in the court below, used as a pit, in front of the temporary scaffold erected on trestles for the performance. Inns of this sort are yet in existence in many places, and new ones continue to be built; one of the fifteenth century is to be seen at Gloucester, a less old one at Chinon, a modern one at Parma. The old Tabard Inn, at Southwark, from which Chaucer had started for his memorable journey and which still existed under Elizabeth, was of this description; so was the George Inn, rebuilt in the seventeenth century and part of which remains with its two rows of wooden galleries in Borough High Street, Southwark. Others, in the heart of the city, were so assiduously frequented by companies of actors that they came to be better known as theatres than hostelries; places of debauch and centres of iniquity, thought the municipal authorities, who began early to fulminate against them and threaten their suppression: "Whereas heartofore sondrye greate disorders and inconvenyences have bene found to ensewe to this cittie by the inordynate hauntynge of greate multitudes of people, speciallye youthe, to playes, enterludes and shewes, namelye occasyon of frayes and quarrelles, eavell practizes of incontineneye in great Innes, havinge chambers and secret places adjoyninge to their open

stagies and galleries, inveyglynge and alleurynge of maides, speciallye orphanes, and good cityzens children under age, to previe and unmete contractes," many "other enormities" being perpetrated, and numerous people being killed or "mayhemmed" through the fall of those lightly built scaffolds and stages, and also "by engynes, weapons and powder used in plaies . . . Nowe, therefore . . ."

Now therefore, be it enacted, by the authority of "this Comen Councell . . . that no inkeper, tavernkeper, nor other person whatsoever with in the liberties of thys cittie shall openlye shewe or playe . . . with in the hous yarde or anie other place . . . anie playe, enterlude, comodye, tragidie, matter or shewe which shall not be firste perused and allowed." The wickedness of those who, after the allowing of a play, should "enterlace, add, mingle or utter" matter not included in the original text, a wickedness not without example since, is duly foreseen, and punishment provided. A tax shall be levied "to the use of the poore in hospitaless." Noblemen and citizens who have plays performed in their houses "for the festyvitie of any marriage, assemblie of ffrendes, or otherlyke cawse," shall not be submitted to these rules, provided the plays be decent, and the performance be "with oute publike or comen collection of money of the auditorie, or behoulders theareof."—December 6, 1574.¹

The growing fondness of the English people for stage performances and the persistent hostility of the Common Council had a decisive result. On the 13th of April, 1576, James Burbage, joiner, and member of the Earl of

¹ Text *e.g.* in Hazlitt, "The English Drama and Stage," London, 1869, 4to, p. 27. Fleay enumerates seven "inns turned to playhouses between 1559 and 1594": Bell, Belle Savage, Blackfriars (years before the theatre of the same name), Bull, Cross Keys, an inn "Nigh Paul's," Whitefriars; an eighth, more recent, the Boar's Head, is doubtful.—"Chronicle History of the Stage," 1890, p. 366.

Leicester's company, leased for twenty-one years a portion of the grounds formerly belonging to the suppressed monastery of Holywell, and there built London's first real theatre. The selection of the site is worthy of notice; between two dangers, that of a possible reluctance on the part of the public to travel so far, and that of remaining under the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor, Burbage did not hesitate and chose the lesser one; he set his theatre to the north of the town, outside the walls, near Finsbury Fields, in the parish of Shoreditch, beyond the pale of the hostile municipality. His building, the first of its kind, was, by excellence, *the* Theatre, and had no other name. The event justified his action; the crowd would have gone much further to attend performances; it flocked to Burbage's and there saw, for the first time, Prince Hamlet pace the boards, in the old drama to be transformed one day into Shakespeare's masterpiece.

Scarcely given, the example was followed with an alacrity and a success showing how keen and general was now the English people's fondness for the stage. The "Theatre" was opened in 1576; the same or the following year, the "Curtain" was built near by. The place had a bad reputation before; it got an execrable one after: "unchaste Shordiche streete," wrote in 1599 one who knew.¹ A third playhouse, the "Fortune," but the Theatre had then been demolished, was erected in the same region in 1599-1600, the promoters (Henslowe and Alleyn) having secured a petition from the inhabitants to the effect that the spot was most appropriately chosen, being "neere unto the ffeildes, and soe farr distant and remote frome any person or place of accompt as that none can be annoyed thearbie."²

¹ "Pilgrimage to Parnassus," ed. Macray, p. 18 (1599 being the real date).

² The players had promised besides to give weekly part of the money gathered "towards ye releef of our poore." To the Privy Council, January, 1599-1600 (?).—W. W. Greg, "Henslowe Papers," 1907, p. 50.

At the other end of the town, towards the south, another quarter was also very propitious for theatrical exhibitions, that merry suburb of Southwark, full of songs and noise, the terminus of the Dover high road, full of inns, of taverns, and houses of ill-fame, the scandal of righteous citizens and the delight of the others, and which continued to be outside the limits of the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction. Donne, in his first Elegy, speaks of lovers who scorn the jealous husband's "household policies,"

As the inhabitants of Thames' right side
Do London's Mayor.

The way to Southwark and its places of amusement had long been familiar to the crowd, who flocked to the amphitheatres early built there for the bear, bull, and dog fights, a "Royal game" bringing in large revenues, and the Master of which was appointed by the Crown. The French poet Jacques Grévin had visited those places of entertainment in his exiles of 1561 and 1567, and he described, in one of his lately-recovered sonnets, the onslaught of the dogs, the stand made by the bears, and his sadness of heart amidst these noisy amusements:

Je vois ore un taureau, ore un ours qui se dresse
Contre l'assaut mordant des dogues pleins d'adresse;
Je les vois combattant leurs forces employer;

Mais l'onde qui est sourde et la pierre muette,
Les bêtes sans raison, ne me font qu'ennuyer,
Depuis qu'il me souvient de ceux que je regrette.¹

In this region rose in succession, first somewhat apart,

¹ "Sonnets d'Angleterre et de Flandre," discovered and edited by Léon Dorez, reprinted by Pinvert, "Grévin," 1899, p. 378. The two circuses for bears and bulls, "the Beare Bayting," "the Bowll Bayting," such as they were before the theatres, are very visible in the map of London published by Bruin and Hogenberg in their "Civitates Orbis Terræ," Cologne, 1577, fol. (privilege dated 1572).

and at an unknown date, the theatre of "Newington Butts"; then, near the river, the theatre of the "Rose," built before 1592,¹ the "Swan" in 1596, the famous "Globe" erected in 1599 by Richard Burbage, with the materials of the Theatre transferred, shortly after the expiration of the lease originally granted to his father, "unto the Bancksyde in the parishe of St. Marye Overyes." Then rose the "Hope" theatre, hastily built in 1613, to take advantage of the disappearance of the Globe destroyed by fire;² but the Globe was soon available again, for "the next spring," writes Stow's continuator, "it was new builded in a farre fairer maner than before."

Three among the greater London playhouses, the Rose, the Fortune and the Hope, were due to the spirit of enterprise of that strange Philip Henslowe, established in Southwark from 1577, and the *genius loci*. Money-lender to the companies of players, pawnbroker, dealer in second-hand clothes and in manuscript plays, wood merchant, starch maker, tanner and dyer, Master with Alleyn of the Royal game of bears, bulls and dogs, owner of theatres, lodging-houses, inns, and places of ill-resort, he inscribed in the blank spaces of a register, which had previously served to keep the accounts of Ashdown Forest, his gains, purchases, loans, and other operations, using throughout the wildest orthography. This register, as well as the papers of the actor Edward Alleyn, his compeer and his wife's son-in-law, constitute, for the historian of the English stage at its most brilliant period, a series of documents of unparalleled value.³ Henslowe is seen there keen on profits, charging

¹ In 1587 probably, according to Greg, "Henslowe's Diary," ii. 48.

² The contractors signed their articles on August 29, 1613, and undertook to pull down the old Bear Garden and to build in its place the intended theatre, which was to have the same height and dimensions as the Swan, and they undertook that everything would be finished before the 30th of November. —Warner, "Catalogue of the MSS. . . . at Dulwich," pp. 240, 241.

³ All of which are preserved at Dulwich, in the college that pious-minded

his players sixty-three pounds for costumes worth forty ; devilishly unscrupulous, his enemies would say, but not so bad a devil after all, ever lending a willing ear to the complaints of the ever-famished purveyors of his stages, and supplying them with funds. Of little learning, he allows "Titus Andronicus" to appear in his register as "Titus and Ondronicus," Pontius Pilate as "Ponesciones Pillett," and Cressida as "Cresse Daye." He himself realised that his knowledge of literature was but scanty, and before paying would have the manuscripts of plays read by Alleyn or some other of his better informed actors, and abide by their opinion. A sort of rudimentary "comité de lecture," as at the "Comédie Française" in our own days, thus decided the choice. How rudimentary may be judged from the following letter :—"To Phil. Hinchloe.—I have harde fyve shetes of a playe of the Conquest of the Indes, and I dow not doute but it wylle be a verye good playe ; tharefore I praye ye delyver them fortye shyillynges in earneste of it and take the papers into your one hands and on easter eve thaye promise to make an ende of all the reste.—Samuell Rowlye." Henslowe considering himself sufficiently informed about Haughton, Day and Smith's "Conquest of the West Indies," wrote below : "Lent, the 4 of

and wealthy Alleyn, when he withdrew from theatrical life, founded as a refuge for destitute old people and a school for children. Twenty-four old men or women are still harboured there, and over seven hundred boys receive their instruction ; the revenues have increased so much that four-fifths of them are applied to other charities. Alleyn, b. 1566, had married Elizabeth Woodward, daughter of Henslowe's wife by her first husband, he died in 1626 and is buried in the chapel of his college. "The Alleyn Papers" and "The Diary of Philip Henslowe," Shaksp. Soc. 1843, 1845, were ed. by J. P. Collier, who inserted in them some of his famous forgeries (the ink he used looks old, but though it is sometimes paler and sometimes darker, there is no other like it in the Diary, and it is easily detected when attention has once been drawn to it) ; cf. Warner, "Catalogue of the MSS. at Dulwich College," 1881. Only good ed. : W. W. Greg, "Henslowe's Diary," Lond., 1904-08, 2 vols. 4to, and "Henslowe's Papers," 1907. Henslowe d. in 1616 ; his diary covers the period 1591-1609.

Aprell, 1601, 40s." ¹ Of no very exacting conscience as it seems, worthy Henslowe, without giving up the profits he drew from houses of less than indifferent repute, never missed a sermon, became vestryman and churchwarden of the great church of St. Mary Overy's (St. Saviour's), Southwark, and was buried there, as a dignitary of the place, not far from rose-crowned Gower.

Here and there, in the intermediary space between the northern and southern groups of theatres, several other stages attracted the public, periodically opened, closed, and reopened, some being an adjunct of hostelries, such as the Red Bull; others having a separate existence, such as the famous Blackfriars, built in 1596, and maintained in spite of the protests of the neighbourhood, which complained of the immorality of its frequenters, the blocking of the streets, the noise of the drums and trumpets, that troubled them when attending services in the church near by. So considerable, they declared, is the "multitude of coaches . . . bringing people of all sortes that sometimes all their streetes cannot conteyne them, that they endanger one another, breake downe stalles, throw downe men's goodes from their shoppes, hinder the passage of the inhabitantes there to and from their howses." Citizens are kept within doors like prisoners, and tradesmen can scarcely succeed in bringing them "their necessary provisions." If by chance they trust themselves out, they risk "their lives and

¹ Warner, "MSS. at Dulwich," p. 21. Other similar letters, among the same papers: "We have heard their booke and lyke yt; their pryce is eight poundes, which I pray, pay now to Mr. Wilson, according to our promysse." Shaw to Henslowe, Nov. 8, 1599, "Henslowe Papers," p. 49. A subsequent hearing by the "generall company" is mentioned by Daborne, 16 May, 1613. According to Mr. Greg, such purchases were simply made on behalf of the company. But Henslowe's part must have consisted in something more than mere money lending; else why the literary information given him? That he actually dealt in plays is certain, as shown by the Daborne letters and by some data referring to the early days at the Rose, "Diary," ii. 111, n. 1.

lyms.”¹ Sentenced to destruction, the Blackfriars survived none the less and gave shelter to some of Shakespeare’s greatest dramas.

This theatre, and some others opened in the same intermediary space (“Cockpit,” “Salisbury Court”), were called “private theatres,” a way of speaking, for they were of course as public as any, and it was not always easy, even then, to draw the line between the public and private playhouses: “The owner of the said play howse within the Blackfryers, under the name of a private howse, hath converted the same to a publique play howse.”² The private theatres were, as a rule, much smaller than the others; in their pit, not so ill-frequented, the audience was seated; they had a roof covering the whole structure, and a stage lit partly by candles (though the performances took place there as elsewhere in the afternoon), partly by means of windows.³ Beauty decks herself, said Wither, with jewels that cannot adorn her:

You may liken every gem
To those lamps which, at a play,
Are set up to light the day:
For their lustre adds no more
To what Titan gave before.⁴

The combined glare of “Titan” and of the candles was toned down at need by curtains drawn before the windows,

¹ Order by the Corporation of the City of London, January 21, 161[9], referring to a petition of November, 1596. Texts in Halliwell-Phillipps, “Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,” 1898, i. pp. 304, 311.

² Same document, *ibid.* p. 311.

³ “The Blackfriars, Cockpit, and Salisbury Court were called private houses and were very small to what we see now. . . . Here they had pits for the gentry and acted by candle light. The Globe, Fortune, and Bull were large houses and lay partly open to the weather, and there they always acted by daylight.”—James Wright, “Historia Histrionica . . . in Dialogue,” 1699 (describing the theatres of the beginning of the century) in Hazlitt’s Dodsley, “Old Plays,” vol. xv.

⁴ “The Mistress of Philarete,” Arber, “English Garner,” vol. iv. p. 411, 1st ed. 1622, but written “many yeares agone.”

to obtain the partial darkness appropriate to scenes of gloom. Dekker describes the streets of the city as looking with all their lights, when evening comes, "like a private Play-house when the windowes are clapt downe, as if some nocturnall or dismall tragedy were presently to be acted."¹

Thus endowed, theatrical London outshone all the cities of the Continent. Paris had then one single theatre, the quadrangular hall, built in 1548 by the Confraternity of the Passion on the grounds of the Hôtel formerly belonging to the Dukes of Burgundy, whose name it retained. Provided with a monopoly which proved disastrous to the development of dramatic art in the capital, the Passion Brothers let their theatre to companies of players more than they occupied it themselves; they prosecuted the infringers of their privilege and had them fined and chastised with so much success that Paris "la grand' ville," had only in 1629 a second permanent play-house²: in the same year London was building its seventeenth.³ Several of Italy's artistic centres also had their theatres, real jewels sometimes, like the famous "Olympic Theatre," erected at Vicenza after Palladio's designs, and the one at Sabbioneta raised shortly after, by Scamozzi, in 1588.⁴ But they were works of magnificence, built by a prince or a society of learned men, and meant for select audiences, not for the vulgar. The theatre at Vicenza was erected for the Academy of the *Olimpici*, hence its name; and was inaugurated before an élite of elegant and scholarly people by a performance of "Ædipus Tyrannus."⁵

¹ "Seven Deadly Sinnes of London," 1606, chap. iii.

² Rigal, "Le Théâtre français avant la Période classique," 1901, p. 81.

³ Annals of Stow, continued by Edm. Howes, 1631, p. 1004.

⁴ "Vespasien de Gonzague, Duc de Sabbioneta," in *Revue de Paris*, July 15, 1889, p. 391.

⁵ See A. Magrini, "Il Teatro Olimpico," Padua, 1847. Fynes Moryson saw this theatre when it was yet new, in the last years of the sixteenth century; he

Great indeed was the difference with London ; travellers wondered at it, and noted the number of theatres and the throngs of people there as one of the curiosities of England. "There are in London," wrote the Dutchman John de Witt in 1596, "four amphitheatres of conspicuous beauty ; they are named after the emblem on their signs, and they offer, each day, a varied show to the people. The two best are on the south of the Thames, and are called, after the signs overhanging them, the Rose and the Swan. Two others are outside the town, on the north ; they can be reached by following the street which passes the Episcopalian Gate, called *Biscopgat* in the native speech. . . . The largest and stateliest of all is the one with the sign of a Swan (in the native speech : *te theatre off te cijn*), for three thousand men can be accommodated there." The Swan was then the most recent of the London playhouses ; it had just been finished when De Witt saw it, and he considered this building so extraordinary that he drew a sketch of the interior. A copy of his drawing, a document unique at this date, has luckily been preserved.¹ "London," observed on his side Hentzner, a

was struck by its rare elegance : "The théâtre at Vicenza now standing and in use for comedies is faire and stately. The theaters in London in England for stage plaies, are more remarkable for the number and for the capacity then for the building."—"Itinerary," 1617, fol. 3rd part, p. 68.

¹ "Amphitheatra Londinii sunt iv visendæ pulchritudinis quæ a diversis intersigniis diversa nomina sortiuntur : in iis varia quotidie scæna populo exhibetur. Horum duo excellentiora ultra Tamisim ad meridiem sita sunt, a suspensis signis Rosa et Cygnus nominata : Alia duo extra urbem ad septentrionem sunt, viâ quâ itur per Episcopalem portam vulgariter Biscopgat nuncupatam. . . . Theatrorum autem omnium prestantissimum est et amplissimum id cujus intersignium est cygnus (vulgo *te theatre off te cijn*), quippe quod tres mille homines in sedilibus admittat." The text and the accompanying sketch were discovered in 1888 by Dr. Gaedertz, of Berlin, in the commonplace book of Arend van Buchell, now preserved in the University Library at Utrecht. Van Buchell seems to have copied them in his own book, "ex observationibus Londinensibus Johannis de Witt," as runs the title of his notes ; up to the last sentence the text was apparently transcribed word for word, as the author—that is, De Witt—speaks twice in the first person, alluding to his sketch in

German, in 1598, "possesses several theatres in which English actors play, almost every day, comedies and tragedies before a considerable number of spectators."¹

From the midst of the small houses with pointed roofs, emerged those large buildings thirty-two feet high; such were the measurements of the Globe and the Fortune. Contrary to continental playhouses, and with the single exception of the square-shaped Fortune,² the English theatres were circular, most of them with a polygonal exterior. Drayton, alluding to his own early dramas, speaks of the time when he :

. . . In the Circuit for the laurel strove,

and received the applause of "the proud round."³ "This

these words: "Cujus [the Swan theatre] quidem formam, quod Romani operis umbram videatur exprimere supra adpinxi." But in the last sentence Buchell obviously speaks himself and sums up some other notes of his friend's: "Narrabat idem se vidisse in Britannia," etc. Text and drawing have been often published and commented upon, e.g. by Gaedertz himself, Bremen, 1888, by H. B. Wheatley, "Transactions of the New Shakspeare Soc.," November 9, 1888, etc. Numerous efforts have been made of late to find how the text of sixteenth-century English plays might agree with what we know of the stage and scenery of the period. See e.g. C. Brodmeier, "Die Shakespeare Bühne," Weimar, 1904 (an exposé of the hard to accept "alternation theory"; scenes must, according to it, have succeeded each other in regular alternance, one on the fore-stage, with no properties, and one on the rear part of the platform, with properties); G. F. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging," Chicago, 1905; V. E. Albright, "A Typical Shaksperian Stage," New York, 1908.

¹ "Sunt porro Londini extra urbem theatra aliquot, in quibus histriones angli comoedias et tragoedias singulis fere diebus, in magna hominum frequentia agunt, quas variis etiam saltationibus, suavissima adhibita musica, magno cum populi applausu finire solent."—"Itinerarium Germaniæ. Angliæ," Nurenberg, 1612, 4to, p. 131. Hentzner's visit to England is of 1598.

² "Everye waie square without and . . . square everye waie within."—Building contract of Peter Street, carpenter, 1600; Greg, "Henslowe Papers," p. 4; see W. H. Godfrey and W. Archer's clever attempt to show, from this contract, what the Fortune was like, *New Shakespeareana*, Oct., 1908. The square shape proved unsatisfactory, and when the Fortune was destroyed by fire in 1621, it was rebuilt circular (and in bricks instead of wood).—Warner, "MSS. at Dulwich," p. xxxi.

³ "Idea," Sonnet xlvii.

wooden O," says Shakespeare ; "this thronged round," says Jonson¹ ; "those publique circuits," says Drayton again. The "Royal game" of bull and bear baiting had early accustomed the public to this shape, well adapted to circus performances, where the exhibition is interesting from every side ; Burbage, moreover, and most of his imitators after him, wanted their theatres to be available for all sorts of performances, and not solely for dramatic ones : fencing matches (a new art, of foreign origin and in immense vogue), dances, tumblings, feats on the rope, and even, at the Hope, baiting exhibitions. In such a playhouse as the latter, the stage consisted of a movable floor on tressels : "A stage to be carryed or taken awaie and to stande uppon tressells."² Such theatres thus combined the entertainments which we find to-day at the circus, the *plaza de toros*, the music hall, the fencing school and the "Comédie Française."

At the door stood the gatherer with his money-box, a position of trust often misused.³ He asked a penny

¹ "Henry V." chorus of act i. ; "Every Man out of his Humour," Induction. The maps and views of London of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries confirm the accuracy of these terms. See for example Norden's map of 1593, reproduced in Harrison's "Description of Britaine," ed. Furnivall, 1877, and Visscher's map of the beginning of the seventeenth century : the part showing the Globe and the Bear Garden, the exterior being polygonal, is reproduced, *e.g.*, in my "Shakespeare in France," p. 37.

² Contract for the building of the Hope.—Warner, "MSS. . . at Dulwich," p. 240. Henslowe has the Bear Garden pulled down in 1613 and rebuilt in three months as a "plaiehouse fitt and convenient in all thinges, bothe for players to playe in, and for the game of beares and bulls to be bayted in the same," with "a stage to be carried or taken awaie, and to stande uppon tressells," the new house to be modelled on the "plaiehouse called the Swan."—Greg, "Henslowe Papers," p. 19.

³ Complaint against a gatherer who, the comedians said, had proved "falce to us" : he should be forbidden ever again "to take the box." As he was, however, a protégé of Alleyn's, the players offer to entrust him with the care of mending their worn-out costumes.—Greg, "Henslowe Papers," p. 85. The wife of an actor is recommended for the position of gatherer on account of her "upright dealing in that nature," 1612 ; see also a complaint of Henslowe's players that they have to salary too many gatherers, *ibid.* pp. 65, 87.

for the pit (same price as at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris), and from a penny to threepence for the galleries, according to the place or the story, and according sometimes to the appearance of the visitors :

"*Lanthorne*. Look to your gathering there, good man Filcher.

"*Filcher*. I warrant you, sir.

"*Lanthorne*. An there come any gentle folks, take two pence a piece, Sharkwell.

"*Sharkwell*. I warrant you, sir, three pence an we can." ¹

The most favoured, a favour any one could get for his money, sat on the stage and paid sixpence ; but gentlemen were to be found in numbers at the twopenny places : "Slothe himselfe will come," writes Dekker, "and sit in the two-pennie galleries, amongst the gentlemen." ²

People walked in and found themselves in a circular yard, with no benches, open to the weather, and surrounded with three stories of wooden galleries ; this was the pit. Staircases leading from this yard gave access to the galleries. The stage, raised to man's height, was "paled in belowe with good stronge and sufficyent newe oken bourdes," and "extended to the middle of the yard." ³ A trap in the floor permitted the appearance and disappearance of supernatural beings : "Envy arises in the midst of the stage. . . . Descends slowly." ⁴ Backed up against

¹ Ben Jonson, "Bartholomew Fair," v. 1.

² "Seven Deadly Sinnes," 1606, chap. iv. Allusion to ambassadors visiting the playhouses and to the crowds drawn by their presence.

³ Contract for the building of the Fortune, January 8, 1600, giving inferential information concerning the Globe, which is to be imitated in most respects.—Greg, "Henslowe Papers," p. 5. The scaffolds erected at fairs for tumblers, quacks, etc., time out of mind, seem to have been the model thus followed. Tabarin's stage was similarly arranged, being erected to man's height, without fencings, and with a piece of arras for a background. See frontispiece of the "Inventaire général des Œuvres de Tabarin," Paris, 1622.

⁴ Ben Jonson's "Poetaster."

the circuit wall, the stage, sometimes without any fencings or balusters, advanced into the area, leaving, not only in front but also on the sides, an empty space for the standing spectators of the pit. Other spectators, seated on the rear of the stage, in a sort of box called "the lords' room," above the common dressing hall or "'tiring house" of the comedians ("mimorum ædes" in the drawing of John de Witt), saw the players from behind. These places were none the less considered most desirable; the occupants were by themselves and had not to fear the contact of unpleasant chance neighbours. Players were thus surrounded by spectators on every side.¹

When it rained the pit got wet, a mishap of little import; people were accustomed to that; large hats and thick cloaks did duty for umbrellas. "They are greedie of wickednes," wrote a censor, "and wil let no time, nor spare for anie weather (so great is their devotion to make their pilgrimage) to offer their penie to the Diuel."² When the weather was exceptionally bad, however, the receipts fell: "This winter," says Histrio in Jonson's "Poetaster," "has made us all poorer than so many starved snakes; nobody comes at us; not a gentleman."³ The stage had a roof that

¹ Similar boxes existing in sixteenth-century French theatres are very visible in the cut preceding each comedy in "P. Terentii Comœdiæ," Paris, 1552, fol. Something of a like arrangement survives in certain opera-houses, in the Paris one, for instance, with its boxes on the very stage, the occupants of which find themselves behind the curtain when it drops, and see the actors from behind when they sing on the fore-part of the stage. These boxes in the old English playhouses have of late been described as the "balcony," the place for Juliet to speak to Romeo, or for besieged citizens to appear "on the walls." Schelling ("Elizabethan Drama," 1908, i. 179) goes even so far as to suggest that the strolling players' tragedy in "Hamlet" was performed there. But the few drawings or engravings which have come down to us leave no doubt that that place was occupied by spectators.

² "A second and third Blast of retrait from Plaies," by Anglo-philæ Euthæo, 1580, in Hazlitt, "English Drama and Stage," 1869, p. 131.

³ "Poetaster," iii. 1. Histrio personifies the players of the Southwark theatres, all of which were open to the sky. In these so-called summer play-

covered it, sometimes partly, as at the Swan, sometimes completely, or nearly so, as at the Globe and the Fortune, with "a sufficient gutter of leade to carrie and convey the water from the coveringe of the said stage to fall backwards."¹ But for such a precaution the water would have dripped on the heads of the spectators, an unwarranted aggravation of their discomforts. The galleries, too, had a roof, usually thatched at first, and tiled later, when the destruction of the Globe had shown the danger of thatch, and the building had been burnt down in an instant, 29th June, 1613: "Now, King Henry" (in, as it seems, Shakespeare's "Henry VIII."), "making a masque at the Cardinal Wolsey's house, and certain chambers (pieces of ordnance) being shot off at his entry, some of the paper, or other stuff, wherewith one of them was stopped did light on the thatch, where, being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole house to the very grounds. This was the fatal period of this virtuous fabric, wherein yet nothing did perish but wood and straw and a few forsaken cloaks"²—to say nothing of,

houses performances took place even in winter, but they were less frequent and not so well attended. Webster attributes the bad success of his "White Divel" to the fact that it had been given "in so dull a time of winter, presented in so open and black a theatre." It had been performed at the Curtain. Some players write to Alleyn in 1617: "We stood the intemperate weather till more intemperate Mr. Meade thrust us over."—"Henslowe Papers," 93.

¹ Contract for the building of the Fortune, the Globe being chosen as model; both are provided "with a shadowe or cover over the saide stadge."

² Sir H. Wotton to Sir Edm. Bacon, July 2, 1613, "Life and Letters of Sir H. Wotton," by L. P. Smith, Oxford, 1907, 2 vols., vol. ii. p. 32; cf. below, p. 266, note. The danger or inconvenience of such roofs was obvious and had been noticed before that catastrophe; the contract for the building of the Fortune, dated 1600, and in which the Globe is constantly named as the example to be followed, makes an exception in this respect: all the roofed parts "to be covered with tyle."

more than probably, some manuscripts of Shakespeare's plays.

Above the stage and on the top of the building rose a small room or gable with a flag bearing the sign of the theatre attached to it,¹ and with an open arch through which the trumpeter of the company announced by appropriate soundings, to the assembled audience that they would not have long to wait, and to the belated comers that they should make haste, the performance being about to begin.

The rusticity of a wooden structure,² a thatched roof and a pit open to the sky, must not mislead us as to the interior aspect of these theatres. They were very pleasant to look at, painted in brilliant colours, with turned columns of wood, stained so well in imitation of marble that the most cunning, "*nasutissimi*," those with sharpest nose, said John de Witt, were imposed upon and thought they were real marble. The old Theatre itself was called "*gorgeous*," in the sermon, it is true, of a hostile preacher who may have sought to exaggerate its splendour;³ but foreign visitors used the same terms.

¹ At the Rose the flag was in silk, and had cost 28s. 8d. (1602); "*Henslowe's Diary*," Greg, ii. 48.

² A structure, more exactly, in which wood was predominant. The foundations, up to a certain height, were "*of pyles, brick, lyme, and sand*" (contract for the Fortune). Judging from the contemporary engravings, the outside must have received a coat of mortar, giving it the appearance of masonry. According to John de Witt the walls of the Swan were made "*coacervato lapide pyrritide*," of a concrete of flint; and commentators have found some difficulty in reconciling this testimony with many others (Hentzner's, for example: "*Quæ omnia lignea sunt*"), stating that English theatres were wooden buildings. But it is not improbable that the Swan consisted in a strong wooden frame of carpenter's work, the intervals between the timber being filled with concrete. Such a structure could well be called by some a wooden one, and by others one with concrete walls. Old houses built in this fashion are still numerous in villages; they are often called wooden houses, though bricks, stones, and mortar are as much used in the construction as timber.

³ Stockwood, 1578, in Ordish, "*Early London Theatres*," 1894, p. 64.

These buildings are of conspicuous beauty, "*visendæ pulchritudinis*," said de Witt. Coryat, when at Venice in 1608, admired the wonders of the city, but not its theatres; he had seen finer ones in London: "I was at one of their playhouses, where I saw a comedie acted; the house is very beggarly and base, in comparison of our stately playhouses in England."¹ All the accounts which have reached us show that the painter's part was a considerable one in English playhouses: "The Theater, or some other paintid stage," writes Harvey to Spenser in 1579, "paintid" being the most characteristic epithet he bethought himself of. Whether for building or repairing, the painter had much to do: "Pd unto the paynters, xxvjs. . . . Pd the wages of the plasterer, iiijjs. . . . Pd for paynting my stage, xjs.," writes, now and then, Henslowe, in his "Diary," 1591-2. The carpenter who undertook the building of the Fortune was careful to specify, for the matter was of importance, that he should not "be charged with anye manner of paynteinge in or aboute the saide frame, howse or stadge, or anie parte thereof." His words plainly show that painting would be used in each and every part of the building.

On a stage thus arranged, with spectators surrounding the players on all sides, scenery offered a difficult problem. The perusal of the considerable mass of documents which have come down to us concerning London theatres allows us to sum up in a word what was then customary: not much scenery as we understand it, but many "practicables" and accessories. A few pieces of tapestry or arras, some draperies or hangings constituted, in many cases, the main part of what we would have called scenery. An arras at the furthest end of the scene² usually covered the door or doors giving access

¹ "*Crudities*," 1611; Glasgow, 1905, i. p. 386.

² Not to be seen in the sketch by John de Witt, who represents his theatre as empty as possible, in order to better show the structure. But the arras

to the comedians' room ; this was the main *coulisse*, the principal means of access and exit for players ; the place too where stood the author when he came, as nervous as to-day, to be present at a first performance of his work : "I am looking, lest the poet hear me . . . behind the arras," says the stage-keeper in the Induction to "Bartholomew Fair." There, sometimes, when things went wrong, was the writer heard to curse the players, the prompter, and the musicians, "stamp at the book-holder, swear for our properties, curse the poor tire-man" ; and even kick the stage-keeper "three or four times about the tiring house."¹ Behind the same arras stood the prompter, book in hand, with a large sheet stuck before him on which were inscribed in big letters the principal stage directions, entrances, exits, and what properties were to be kept ready.² This was also the principal place of concealment : in the "Cuck-queanes . . . Errants," a gold bowl which had disappeared is suddenly produced again, the actor,

forming the background, divided into two for the admittance of players, and with the "lords' room" above it, may be seen in the frontispiece to "Roxana" by W. Alabaster, 1632 ; same arras in the frontispiece to Richards's "Messalina," 1640 (both reproduced *e.g.* by G. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging," Chicago, 1905). Same arras, also divided in the middle, with a player coming in through the opening, in an interior view of, maybe, the Red Bull, 1672 (reproduced as a frontispiece to plays by T. Heywood, "Mermaid Series") : the stage, with standing spectators on three sides, and the lords' room at the back, offers the same arrangement as that of the Swan in John de Witt's drawing. This was the normal one in London, and in Paris also, in the sixteenth century. See Gourmont's engraving, reproduced in Bapst, "Essai sur l'histoire du Théâtre," 1893, p. 152, and the numerous cuts in "P. Terentii . . . Comoediæ," Paris, 1552, fol.

¹ Inductions to Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair" and to "Cynthia's Revels." As now too, the poet was admitted free, but he did not always wish to be known until he had ascertained whether the play was a success—"You must take no money of him. . . . He is the author.—*Littlewit*. Peace, speak not too loud, I would not have any notice taken that I am the author, till we see how it passes."—"Bartholomew Fair," v. 3.

² A few have been preserved, one for a play which we possess : Peele's "Battell of Alcazar," ab. 1588-9. See Greg, "Henslowe Papers," 127 ff. ; Halliwell, "The Theatre Plats of Three Old English Dramas," 1860, fol.

according to the stage direction, drawing it "from behind *the arras*,"¹ the arras which, of course, was sure to be there. Behind the arras, too, Polonius concealed himself in order to be killed as "a rat," and Falstaff fell asleep, and the snorings of the "oily rascal" kept the audience in merriment.

Arrases appear as an indispensable item in the inventories of companies. Henslowe's players complained, in 1614, that he kept for himself arrases which they had purchased with their own money.² They were used both for practical and ornamental purposes, and though such subjects would in many cases clash with that of the play, they usually represented mythological or historical personages and scenes. In the preface of the "New Inn," Jonson complains of having been condemned by gallants who never listened to his play: "As the stage furniture or arras clothes they were there; as spectators, away: for *the faces in the hangings*, and they, beheld alike." When the tapestry wore out or lost its colours, it would be economically repaired with paint.³

Draperies or hangings were kept ready according to the subject, so as to be displayed at need, or folded up. By this modest process, the bed-chamber of Imogen was revealed in Shakespeare's "Cymbeline," with the trunk for traitor Iachimo, the bed with the young princess asleep in it, and a tapestry on the furthest wall which represented the meeting of Antony and Cleopatra, an almost contemporary event. When Iachimo has taken note of all the particulars that were to mislead the credulous husband, "the scene closes," that is to say, the hangings fall again, and the play continues on what is left open of the stage,

¹ Ab. 1600, Roxburghe Club, 1824, p. 87.

² "Articles of Grievance," 1615; "Henslowe Papers," p. 86.

³ "I am none of your fresh pictures that use to beautify the decayed dead arras in a public theatre."—"Cynthia's Revels," Induction.

this space being supposed to represent "an Ante-chamber, adjoining Imogen's apartment." Dekker recommends his gallant to "creep from behind the arras," and to plant himself so suddenly on the stage that it will seem he has "dropped out of the hangings." Jonson represents one of these cumbersome gentlemen complaining of the players, while occupying himself the space which should be theirs: "'Slid, the boy"—one of the boy-actors at the Blackfriars—"takes me for a piece of perspective, I hold my life, or some silk curtain come to hang the stage here."¹

These draperies were also used to represent the sky and to conceal the pulleys by which any "property" might be hoisted or lowered. This property was sometimes a skeleton or a corpse dangling from a rope (a frequent sight), sometimes a great wooden eagle bearing King Jove, as in "Cymbeline," where the Thunderer, after having delivered his prophecies, is raised again toward the "shadowe or cover" of the stage—"to my palace crystalline" he says; and the characters in the play left below exclaim:

The marble pavement closes, he is enter'd
His radiant roof.

On other occasions, a throne, with a prophet or a goddess on it, was lowered and raised again: "Exit Venus, or if you can conveniently, let a chaire come downe from the top of the stage and draw her up."² Empty thrones were alternately lowered and raised before the eyes of Faustus in Marlowe's play, to give him an idea of the joys of Paradise which he had lost. The doctor was greatly impressed; and, having considered these gilded swinging machines, upon which he knew that he would never sit, he

¹ "Cynthia's Revels," Induction.

² "Alphonsus King of Arragon," by Greene, *in fine*; 1st ed. 1599.

began his immortal despairing speech. The public was greatly impressed too ; a good trusting public which believed, like children, all that it was told. In my play, grumbled Jonson,

No creaking throne comes down, the boys to please.¹

But the audience wanted the thrones and did not feel at all grateful to Jonson for being so reasonable.

Movable properties and timber *practicables* had also the great advantage of making the public understand where it was : in a town, in a castle, a hut, a forest, or on a cliff. The lack of real scenery was supplied by properties which stood as signs and emblems of the thing represented : a tree for a forest, a steeple for a cathedral, a throne for Paradise. Besides beds, tables, chairs, and other furniture, companies of players possessed, as we see from their inventories, pasteboard rocks, trees with golden fruit, sea monsters or infernal ones, thrones and royal canopies. A wooden frame with a ladder inside, concealed by painted boards or canvas, allowed actors to perform their part on the town walls or at the palace window. Juliet could thus come and lean out from her balcony, and dimly see through her tears Romeo departing at the song of the lark, through the alleys of the Capulet garden. Thus too could the citizens of Harfleur appear on the battlements of their fortress and answer the summons of Henry V., and the citizens of Angiers, in " King John " (" Enter citizens upon the walls "), hear the besiegers threaten them with the shots of their premature artillery. In a play of Marston's, a tree occupying the centre of the stage allowed a lover to

¹ Prologue of " Every Man in his Humour." Thrones, it must be observed, were the accepted emblem and sign of Paradise. In the upper church at Assisi, a companion of St. Francis is represented by Giotto (?) beholding the place in Paradise which the saint would one day fill, and Paradise is figured by five armchairs painted on the blue background at the top of the fresco.

climb from branch to branch to the window of his betrothed.¹ The inventory of the Lord Admiral's men in 159[9] shows them the owners of a quantity of properties of this sort, meant to do duty for more complete scenery. They had one rock, one "tome (tomb) of Dido," one tomb of all work, "one payer of stayers (stairs) for Fayeton" (probably covered with painted canvas representing clouds, and used for Phaeton's fall), "two stepells and one chyme of belles and one beaçon," a "raynbowe, one littell alter," one "baye tree," "one tree of gowlden apelles, Tantelouse tre," the time-honoured "Hell mought" (mouth) still in demand, the "sittie of Rome" (doubtless represented by some painted boards with the name written on them); withal a quantity of other objects indispensable for the scenes of gloom so often represented in English tragedies: wooden heads to be brought all gory on to the stage when any of the characters had been decapitated behind the hangings; a head of Mahomet which spoke; "owld Mahemetes head";² "Faetones lymes" or the limbs of Phaeton produced piecemeal after his fall, several "coffens," one "gostes sewt" (ghost's suit), and a bodice for another ghost, some lions' heads, the three heads of "Serberosse," one "dragon in Fostes," etc.³ We have no inventory concerning Shakespeare's company, but no more than the Lord

¹ "The Fawn," printed 1606. Owing to the use of such battlements, balconies, etc., on a stage surrounded with spectators, not all of these could see everything at all times: but before we declare this unlikely and try to explain it away, as has been attempted (see these discussions summed up in G. F. Reynolds' "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging," Chicago, 1905), we must remember that the same thing happens in most of our modern theatres. Who of us has not sometimes wished that the events in a play would take place on the *other* side of the stage, the one we could see?

² Such a head appeared in Greene's "Alphonsus," 1st ed. 1599: "Let there be a brazen head set in the middle of the place behind the stage [that is to say at the partition of the arras overhanging the door which served for the actors' entrance], out of which cast flames of fire. Drums rumble within."—Act iv.

³ "Inventory of the goods of my lord Admeralles men, tacken the 10 of Marche in the yeare 1598."—Greg, "Henslowe Papers," p. 113.

Admiral's could it do without wooden or pasteboard heads : heads of Cloten, of Macbeth, Jack Cade, Lord Hastings, etc., all of which, and many more, had to be produced on the stage. Suits for ghosts, to say nothing of their bodices, were also indispensable.

The importance of these properties is shown again by the considerable sums spent by Henslowe to purchase "divers thinges" for each new play, which things were not costumes, as those figure apart. Thus, for the "Spencers" of Porter, the expense in "divers thinges," dresses excluded, was of twenty pounds in 1599; for the play of "Carnowll Wolsey" (such is Henslowe's orthography for "Cardinal"), the then enormous sum of thirty-nine pounds seven shillings and ninepence was spent in costumes and "divers thinges."

The carpenter, who had to be machinist too, figures sometimes in the accounts; he receives fourteen shillings for a scaffold in the play of "Berowne," and fourteen pence "for poleyas and workmanshipp for to hange Absolome." The rôle of the painter giving the proper appearance to the timber frames and the canvas is not a mere supposition, but a certainty: paid "unto the paynter of the propertyes for the playe of the Brothers, 20s." (1602).

The crowd, that same crowd which, for centuries, had listened with rapture to the performance of mystery-plays, was not very exacting, but on two points at least it would make no concession: it wanted, first, to understand, second, to see a pleasing or thrilling sight. It was enough that the pieces of furniture and the scraps of scenery should be intelligible emblems; the spectators' imagination and the poet's verses did the rest; the tree with golden apples belonging to the Lord Admiral's men was all that sixteenth-century theatre-goers needed to fancy themselves among the wonders of the garden of the Hesperides; the pasteboard rock of the same troupe did

duty quite creditably for a cliff overhanging the sea ; and the audience saw, with their mind's eye, the immensity of the waters, motionless in the calm of evening, or tossed by the storm and engulfing ships and their crews. When they had once understood what was meant, they asked for nothing more. Poets knew it ; Shakespeare was sure his plea would be heard when he told his public, in the prologue of " Henry V. " :

Pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirit, that hath dar'd,
On this unworthy scaffold, to bring forth
So great an object. . . . Let us . . .
On your imaginary forces work . . .
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts ;
Into a thousand parts divide one man . .
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them . . .
For 'tis your thoughts that must now deck our kings,
Carry them here and there ; jumping o'er times ;
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass.

Many others spoké likewise ; Thomas Heywood said :

Our stage so lamely can express a sea,
That we are forced by chorus to discourse
What should have been in action.¹

The author of the " Faery Pastorall " has recourse to a more notable device, and suggests that if there be too much difficulty in using the necessary " properties " in that part of the stage where gallants sit, such properties should be replaced by inscriptions stating what ought to have been there : a well, a green bank, etc.²

¹ " Fair Maid of the West," act iv. ; performed ab. 1621.

² " Now if so be that the properties of any these, that be outward, will not serve the turne by reason of concurse of the people on the stage, then you may omitt the sayd properties which be outward and supply their places with their nuncupations only in text Letters."—" The Faery Pastorall," ab. 1600 (?), ed. Haslewood, Roxburghe Club, 1824, p. 94, written by

Concerning the all-important question of place, authors resorted to the easiest and simplest methods for making matters clear. On the wooden frame representing a tower or the gate of a town, the name of the town was painted in large letters; those who could read interpreted the inscription to their neighbours. No one was shocked by the simplicity of the process, for it was an old and well-established one, popular with the authors of mystery-plays, with tapestry weavers, miniature and fresco painters, were they the best among the Italian masters. Benozzo Gozzoli at Pisa painted on the wall of the Campo Santo a fancy Babylon with mediæval battlements, and inscribed on the gate in large letters the word "BABILONIA."¹ Who could have objected to so easy, clear, and convenient a practice, in use everywhere? We may be sure that Henslowe's "sittie of Rome" was similarly labelled. Several towns sometimes were represented simultaneously in this way on the stage, a device inherited from the mysteries, and commonly used in France as late as the days of Corneille.² In the "Cuck-queanes and Cuckolds Errants"³ we have a list of "The properties," and they consist of: "*Harwich*; In the middle of the stage *Colchester* . . . *The Raungers Lodge, Maldon*; A ladder of roapes trussd up near *Harwich*," etc. The three towns named were "properties," in the same way as the ladder of ropes, that is, they consisted of a painted frame representing a town gate, with the name of the town on it. At

W[illiam] P[ercy], author of the "Sonnets to Coelia" (above, II. 389). Such a text, showing that properties were being used on the fore as well as the rear part of the stage, suffices to demonstrate the untenability of the so-called "alternation theory" (above, p. 50, n. 1).

¹ Reproduced in my "Shakespeare in France," p. 67. As for tapestries, see several examples in Jubinal's album: "Les Tapisseries historiées," Paris, 1838; the names of the towns, Jerusalem, Troy, Paris, are constantly inscribed on them.

² "Shakespeare in France," pp. 66 ff.

³ By W[illiam] P[ercy], ab. 1600 (?), ed. Haslewood, Roxburghe Club, 1824.

each new scene, in the text of the play, a stage direction states from which town, that is from which gate, the actors must emerge to play their part on the front of the platform. Thus Nim and Shift walk forward as coming, one from Maldon, the other from Harwich, and, while they meet before the gate marked "Colchester," Nim says: "What! fellow Shift, thou beest welcome to Colchester." Refined minds, like Sidney, might as much as they pleased deride, in elegant treatises written for the happy few, the awkwardness of a stage where the actor had to declare, as he came forth, whether he was in Asia, Africa, or some fancy "under kingdom,"¹ or where one would see "Thebes written in great letters upon an olde doore." Clever men smiled approvingly at these sneers, forgetting that the practice was not so ludicrous after all, since some ancient towns really bore their own name engraved "in great letters" on their main entrance, as can be seen to this day at Perugia: "AUGUSTA PERUSIA," inscribed on the colossal Roman gate of the city. The crowd ignored the sneers, and it was the crowd that filled the theatres and that the authors were bound to please.

The other want of the audience could not be disregarded either: the spectacle must needs be a brilliant and a striking one. What the scenery lacked in splendour was compensated by the actors' costumes. Magnificent ones were used by players; and in this again the English theatres outshone all others.² To say magnificent is not to exaggerate; the most extravagant expenses incurred in

¹ A custom in use in Italy and France as well: "Ceste cité que voyez là devant, c'est Modena."—Prologue to "Les Abusez," Charles Estienne's translation of "Gl' Ingannati," Paris, 1548 (below, p. 219).

² In Paris, until the days of Bellerose and Mondory, "les costumes n'étaient guère remarquables que par leur pauvreté."—Rigal, "Le Théâtre avant la Période classique," 1891, p. 230. In brilliant Venice, Coryat finds that the players' costumes were of the plainest: "Neyther can their actors compare with us for apparell."—"Crudities," 1st ed. 1611.

our days for lace, jewels, or cloth of gold do not surpass the prodigalities of Elizabethan days. In the inventories of companies of players and in Henslowe's accounts rich costumes are of constant recurrence, these "costly garments, fit for tragicke stage," said Spenser.¹ Henslowe purchases yards and yards of velvet, satin, real cloth of gold, silk and gold lace, cloth of silver and red silk. His "son" and compeer, Alleyn, purchases on the 6th of May, 1591, "one blacke velvet cloake with sleeves ymbrodered all with silver and gold," lined with satin and gold, at a cost of £20 10s. 6d.; the price of a chicken was in those days threepence. Henslowe himself purchases ready-made costumes, sells them, lends them, lends money on players' velvet cloaks, his frippery and pawnbroker's shop being one of the most important of his many dominions. A spendthrift left with nothing but his fine dresses would

bring

Them next week to the theatre to sell.²

Companies of players were always ready to purchase rich secondhand clothes. Poor as an actor might be, brilliant costumes were indispensable to him. Gabriel Spencer, the one whom Jonson was to kill, borrows ten shillings to purchase "a plume of feathers"; Borne, the player, pawns his long cloak to Henslowe in order to procure embroideries for his hat, and to shine under it in the play of "The Gwisse" (Marlowe's "Massacre at Paris"), at least so he said: "Lent unto W^m Borne . . . the some of xijs. w^{ch} he sayd yt was to imbrader his hatte for the Gwisse," wrote Henslowe in his Diary; the reason given being a plausible one, the pawnbroker chose to believe the player, and lent the money, 1598.

A costume maker, "our tyerman," says Henslowe, was in attendance at the Rose theatre and lived in an adjoin-

¹ "Faerie Queene," III., xii. 3.

² Donne, sat. iv.

ing house: it was indispensable to have him ever at hand. Even for comedies dealing with everyday life, to grudge expense for costumes would have been misapplied economy, and Henslowe, who understood business better than grammar, spent nine pounds in "tafetie for ij womones gownes, for ij angrey women of Abengton," a comedy by Henry Porter, 1598. Nine pounds were equal to the normal salary of an ordinary player, "hired man," for thirty weeks.

Describing the same play on Henry VIII., which was being performed when the Globe was burnt down, Sir Henry Wotton says that it was "set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty . . . the knights of the order with their Georges and garters, the guards with their embroidered coats and the like"; a majesty, he adds philosophically, "sufficient in truth, within a while, to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous."¹

For characters of secondary importance, sham splendour was resorted to, and tinsel and copper lace imitating real gold were used. One of the pleasant pastimes recommended by Dekker to his gallant seated on the stage consists in proposing bets to his neighbours about the "play-suits' lace," whether "'tis copper" or real gold. Devils could be attired without any great expense, eight shillings would be enough for several; but a "wiches gowne" did not cost less than eighteen shillings for the stuff alone; the tireman took for the cutting and sewing of the dresses of the devils and witch and of a few "sperethes" (spirits), all of them appearing in the "new playe of the ij Brothers tragedie," ten shillings and ninepence, 1602.

A glance at any list of costumes of this date gives

¹ To Sir Edm. Bacon, July 2, 1613, "Life and Letters," ed. L. P. Smith, Oxford, 1907, vol. ii. p. 32.

an idea of the degree of historical accuracy observed in the performances. The attempt to attain exactness was usually limited to the use of "robes" for grave and great personages: senators of Rome, Venice, or elsewhere, Hercules, Time, Tasso (in the play "Tasso's Malen-coley," as Henslowe calls it, performed in 1594, the hero being still alive). Hercules's robe cost thirty shillings, Father Time's forty. In Peele's "Edward I.," however, something more was attempted; the English army was represented returning from the Crusade: "maimed soldiers" appeared on the stage, "with head-pieces and garlands on them, every man with his read-cross on his coat"; and as the taste of the multitude for shows and pageants was very keen, the author recommended that "others as many as may be"¹ should figure in the procession. But, except in very rare cases, all personages of importance were richly clad according to Elizabethan fashions. Anglo-Saxons like Earl Godwin appeared in a satin "dublette," and Henslowe spent his treasure in purchasing "j fardengalle," to be used apparently in the play of "Phaeton," a very bad use of his money we should think, an excellent one he thought, and his audience agreed with him. In the inventory of the Lord Admiral's men figures "Eve's bodeyes" (bodice).

Companies of players, while continuing to bear the names of the great men their patrons, had by degrees become associated with one or two theatres in particular. The Lord Strange's company, afterwards Lord Hunsdon's, otherwise the Lord Chamberlain's company, then, at the accession of James I., the King's company, famous especially because Shakespeare belonged to it, had played first at the Cross Keys,² perhaps at the Theatre, then certainly at the Globe and Blackfriars. The Earl of

¹ "The Famous Chronicle of K. Edward I.," 1593, "Works," ed. Bullen, vol. i. p. 87.

² Greg, "Diary," ii. 73.

Nottingham's men, otherwise the Lord Admiral's, later Prince Henry's players, acted in the theatres belonging to Henslowe.¹ Careful to take with them letters from their patrons and from the great personages their friends² (sometimes forged ones), the various companies ran the provinces when the plague or the ill will of the London authorities occasioned a temporary closing of the theatres. When a company with a name and a standing in the city went about the country, it was a sign of adversity. "How chances it they travel? . . ." says Hamlet, "do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed? . . . Do they grow rusty?" London was indeed, then as now, the place in which to become famous: "And for you, sirra, saies hee to the chieftest of them"—"hee" being Ratsey, who addresses the chief of a company of strolling players, 1605—"thou hast a good presence upon a stage; methinks thou darkenst thy merite by playing in the country. Get thee to London."³

The hierarchy of actors and the partition of gains resembled very much what takes place in our own day at the "Comédie Française." At the top of the ladder were the sharers, something like the "sociétaires" at the "Comédie," who divided the main part of the profits

¹ See in F. G. Fleay, "A Chronicle History of the London Stage," 1890, pp. 34 ff., the list, such as it is possible to draw it, of the English troupes from 1559 to 1603. Cf. J. T. Murray, "English Dramatic Companies in the Towns outside of London, 1550-1600," in *Modern Philology* April, 1905; W. Kelly, "Notices illustrative of the Drama [at] Leicester," London, 1865; Greg, "Henslowe's Diary," ii. 68, ff.

² The Earl of Oxford's men visit Cambridge in 1580: "Also they brought letters from the right honorable the lord chancellor and the right honorable the lord of Sussex," and other letters from Lord Burghley: notwithstanding all of which they were forbidden to play, but they received 20 shillings as a gift.—Hatcher to Burghley, Ellis, "Original Letters," 1st ser. vol. iii. p. 32.

³ Speech attributed to Ratsey the highwayman in "Ratseis Ghoaste," entered May 31, 1605.—Halliwell-Phillips, "Outlines," vol. i. p. 326.

among themselves, being possessed of one or more shares, "parts entières" they call them at the "Comédie"; "one whole share"¹ they used to say in Elizabethan London. At the lower end were the "hirelings," corresponding to the "pensionnaires" of the "Comédie," players with a fixed salary: six shillings a week on an average, which was a common labourer's salary. Thomas Hearne signs an agreement for two years with Henslowe: he is to receive five shillings a week during the first year, and six shillings and eightpence during the second.

Between these two categories stood the mass of ordinary players, who were in an intermediary position and were paid accordingly; being no longer hirelings and not yet sharers. This was the most numerous category.

Shares were purchased, and as they cost little and yielded much, every one wanted to acquire them. But in point of fact the assent of managers of companies and owners of theatres was necessary for such purchases. When the Burbages built the Globe, they "joyned" to themselves "those deserveing men, Shakspeare, Hemings, Condall, Philips, and others, partners in the profittes of that they call the House."² In other words, the owners of the "House" chose the partners and co-sharers who suited them, thus recompensing what exceptional services they might expect from their talents. When a sharer withdrew, he offered his share for sale; outsiders tried to get it, worked underhand and offered a higher price than the normal one; hence angry remonstrances and stormy competitions. Players whose hopes had been defeated protested, appealed, even in those early days, to the

¹ Contract of Robert Dawes, "Henslowe Papers," p. 123.

² Text derived, as well as the following ones, from a very curious series of documents, concerning the right claimed by players to purchase shares, with the answer of some holders of the same who were not actors, appeal to the Lord Chamberlain, etc.; year 1635, but frequent references to former customs; in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," 1898, vol. i. pp. 312 ff.

Government, praised their own merits, and asked that the shares be attributed to them "for their moneys," but, of course, at the reduced rates, which implied a considerable profit: "at such rates as have beene formerly given." The public would gain thereby as well as themselves, they pleaded, for they would play better, being better paid: "Wherby they might reape some better fruit of their labours then hitherto they have done, and bee encouraged to proceed therein with cheerfulness." The Lord Chamberlain, greatly puzzled, listened to complaints, read petitions, put them carefully by, for which cause we still have them, distributed good words, acted as a pacifier, and spoke of better times in the near future.

A marked difference with the present system at the French "Comédie" is found in the manner of distributing the receipts. They were divided into two equal parts, one attributed to the "sharers," who, it is true, had to provide for "the ordinary repairs of the house," hence the name which they also bore of "house keepers." The other half was divided among all the troupe, including these same sharers, the "hired men," however, receiving only their fixed salary and having to content themselves with their six shillings a week. From this part of the profits, as we see by a complaint of some ordinary actors, who not being sharers had no other source of gain, were to be deducted the "wages to hired men and boys, musicke, lightes, etc. . . . besides the extraordinary charge which the sayd actors are wholly at for apparell *and poetes*." It is easy to conceive, as the complainants observe, "what those gaine that are both actors and houskeepers and have their shares in both." Those men made a rapid fortune. Without speaking of the unusual case of Alleyn, a contractor and manager, who was able to pay ten thousand pounds for the manor which he transformed into his college, or of the Burbages, owners

of theatres, a number of players who were nothing but players, like Augustine Phillipps, Shakespeare's friend, or Heminge and Condell, those companions of the poet who printed his works after his death, became men of wealth, had houses of their own, and could rear under their roof families of five, nine, and thirteen children respectively. "What is your profession, sayd Roberto"—Robert Greene, in one of his autobiographical novels—"Truely, sir, said he, I am a player.—A player, quoth Roberto, I tooke you rather for a gentleman of great living, for if by outward habit men shuld be censured, I tell you, you would be taken for a substantiall man.—So I am . . . quoth the player. . . . The worlde once went hard with me, when I was faine to carrie my playing fardle a footebacke. *Tempora mutantur.*"¹

In the imaginary account we possess of the adventures of Gamaliel Ratsey, the only too real highwayman, hanged in March, 1605, a chapter is devoted to players, their manners, and their wealth. An allusion is made to those who became so rich that they could build colleges, Alleyn being obviously meant; and another allusion seems to be aimed at, or in any case perfectly fits, Shakespeare. "Get thee to London," says Ratsey to a member of the strolling troupe he had met in the country. ". . . there shalt thou learn to be frugal . . . and when thou feelest thy purse well lined, buy thee some place or lordship in the country, that, growing weary of playing, thy mony may there bring thee to dignitie and reputation"—the very thing Shakespeare was notoriously preparing to do at this very time. But then becoming a sharer was indispensable: "And in this presage and propheticall humour

¹ "Groatsworth of Wit," 1592; "Works," Grosart, vol. xii. p. 131. In his diatribe against theatres Gosson had had to acknowledge that some actors were "sober, discrete, properly learned, honest house-holders and citizens."—"Schoole of Abuse," 1579, ed. Arber, p. 40.

of mine, sayes Ratsey, kneele downe—Rise up, Sir Simon Two Shares and a halfe ; thou art now one of my knights and the first knight that ever was player in England." More truly propheticall than ever he thought, the author of "*Ratseis Ghoaste*" announced in jest what happened in truth in our days.¹

In the same way again as at the "*Comédie Française*" of to-day, players were forbidden to act in other theatres than their company's or to leave the same before the appointed date. A heavy penalty was incurred in such cases : forty pounds in the agreement signed by Thomas Downton, and one hundred marks in the articles by which William Borne pledged himself, on the 10th of August, 1597, to play at the Rose three years running, "and not in any other howsse publicke about London." Prospective fines were similarly subscribed to : in case the player (Robert Dawes) should arrive late for rehearsals, twelve pence, or for performances, three shillings (he must be "ready apparrelled" to play at "three of the clock in the afternoone"); or if he should be "overcome with drinck at the tyme when he [ought to] play," ten shillings ; or if he did not come at all, one pound. If, after the performance, he went to shine at the tavern or elsewhere adorned with dresses belonging to the company, as the temptation was great, it was to be countervailed by an enormous penalty ; the fine was forty pounds.²

¹ "*Ratseis Ghoaste*, or the second part of his madde Prankes and Robberies," of uncertain date, but licensed May 31, 1605. The "*Life and Death of . . . Ratsey*," or first part, had been licensed May 2, same year. The chapter concerning the meeting of Ratsey and of the strolling players is reprinted *e.g.* in Halliwell-Phillipps's "*Outlines*," 1898, i. p. 325. The above quotation certainly fits Shakespeare, but not so the rest of the passage : "Make thy hand a stranger to thy pocket, thy hart slow to performe thy tongues promise," etc.—the reverse of what we know of the great poet's "open and free nature" (Ben Jonson).

² Henslowe's "*Diary*," *Shakesp. Soc.* pp. 258, 259, and other examples in the following pages ; Greg, "*Henslowe Papers*," p. 123.

No woman figured in the companies. Feminine parts were performed by pretty visaged boys, a great profit from the moral point of view said the defenders of dramatic art, such as Nash,¹ an immense aggravation asserted the Puritans, such as Prynne.² As early as 1550 Ascham, seeing at Brussels some "fair lusty young ladies" at mass on a Sunday, observed: "They seemed boys rather than ladies, excellent to have played in tragedies."³ Nothing was forgotten to give these children the appearance of real women. They let their hair grow; rich costumes, jewels and lace were liberally allowed them: ten pounds to purchase "wemens gowns," four pounds to procure "viij yardes of clothe of gowlde for the womones gowne in Branhowlte" (Brennhoralt?), 1597, white satin, "tafetie and tinsel," "a blacke tynsell valle" (veil), forty-five shillings "to bye the skyrtes of a womoans gowne of sylver chamlett," we read in Henslowe's Diary. "The players' boy being by, and in *his ladyes gowne* . . ." says Armin in his account of a strolling troupe's adventures.⁴ Henslowe purchased a young boy as he would have purchased any other piece of property for his theatres, and hired him out to companies who wanted his services: "Bowght my boye, Jeames Brystow, of William Augusten, player, the 18 of desembr 1597, for viij li."⁵

When travelling abroad, Englishmen were greatly surprised to find real women playing on foreign stages.

¹ "Pierce Penilesse," 1592; "Works," Grosart, ii. p. 92.

² "Histrio-Mastix," Prynne's famous treatise in prose, 1633, 4to, pp. 203, 211; where he describes "our effeminate men-monsters."

³ "Whole Works," ed. Giles, i. 246.

⁴ "A Nest of Ninnies," 1608, a collection of histories, anecdotes, etc., by Armin, a comical actor who played at the Globe; reprinted by the Shakespeare Society, 1842. The strolling players described, p. 36, are shown preparing a performance at a country gentleman's house; they dress in the kitchen: "The players dressed in the gentleman's kitchen, and so entered through the entry into the hall."

⁵ See a satire of such sales in Ben Jonson's "Poetaster," iii. 1.

"Here," at Venice, writes Coryat, in the summer of 1608, "I observed certaine things that I never saw before. For I saw women acte, a thing that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath beene sometimes used in London; and they performed it with as good a grace, action and gesture and whatsoever convenient for a player as ever I saw any masculine actor." At the Restoration there was a complete change, and to make up for lost time, London had plays in which all the parts were acted by women.¹

Companies entirely composed of children, the prettiest that could be found, had been early formed and enjoyed in Shakespeare's time an extraordinary popularity. "Didst thou see a prettier child? How it behaves itself, I warrant ye, and speaks, and looks, and puts up the head?"² Such performances had been, at first, a court amusement; the young choristers of the Chapel Royal acted dramas, sometimes in Latin, before Henry VIII.; the tradition was continued and they played also before Elizabeth. The children of St. Paul's, a decidedly mundane cathedral in spite of its famous preachers, became by degrees a real company of players and gave performances in their great hall and elsewhere. The Blackfriars

¹ "Coryat's Crudities," 1611, Glasgow, 1905, i. 386. "The Parson's Wedding," when revived, was entirely performed by women; Dodsley's "Old Plays," ed. Hazlitt, xv. p. 412. In the same way as for scenery, the court had early given the example; the Revels' office makes in 1571 payments for "men, woomen and children, in sundry tragedies, playes, maskes and sportes, with their apt howses of paynted canvas."—Feuillerat, "Documents relating to the Revels," p. 129. In France women's parts, but as a rule only those bordering upon farce, were long held by men: "Hubert, qui avait été un des camarades de Molière, avait successivement représenté Madame Pernelle, Madame Jourdain, la Comtesse d'Escarbagnas."—Reynier, "Thomas Corneille," 1892, p. 380.

² Says the citizen's wife, supposed to be one of the audience, in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle," performed by children ab. 1606-7 (F. K. Chambers); 1st ed. 1613. On the popularity of similar troupes in France in the eighteenth century, see "Shakespeare in France," p. 253.

theatre was occupied for years by the children of the Queen's Chapel. These troupes *in decimo sexto* vied with the troupes *in folio*,¹ and gave umbrage to Shakespeare himself, who testily alludes to them.² Jonson versified the eulogy and epitaph of one of these tiny artists who excelled in personating old men : deceived by appearances, Death had taken him.

Most of the companies were a medley of various elements, recalling their early origin ; one recognised in them, with a larger part allotted to the drama proper, those ancient troupes in the pay of great nobles, and which included, during the Middle Ages, jugglers, verse makers, minstrels, dancers, tumblers and jesters. All these people reappeared on the new stages ; each company had its dancers, musicians, clowns, and experts in feats of agility. " Here a dance of shepherds and shepherdesses . . . Twelve rusticks habited like Satyrs . . . dance and then exeunt."³ The clown's part was a most important one ; he improvised, addressed the audience, as was done formerly in mysteries, and rattled off puns, jests, unchaste remarks, and sayings of the silly-witty sort. He was the

¹ Induction (by Webster?) to Marston's "Malcontent," when the play was transferred from the Blackfriars to the Globe, 1st ed. 1604.

² "Hamlet," ii. 2. The children occasionally gave performances out of London ; they played at Leicester in 1591 (also in 1622) : "Geven to the queen's ma^{tes} Playors, being another companye, called the children of the chappell . . . xxvjs. viij*d*."—W. Kelly, "Notices Illustrative of the Drama[at] Leicester," London, 1865, p. 226. The Burbages explained later, in a petition, how the Blackfriars theatre had been by them : "leased out to one Evans that first sett up the boyes commonly called the Queene's Majesties children of the chapel. In processe of time, the boyes growing up to bee men which were Underwood, Field, Ostler . . . it was considered that house would bee as fitt for ourselves, and soe purchased the lease remaining from Evans with our money, and placed men players, which were Hemings, Condall, Shakespeare, etc."—Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," 1898, i. 317. The replacing of the children by Shakespeare and his companions had taken place in the winter of 1609-10.

³ "Winter's Tale," iv. 3. The epilogue of Shakespeare's "2 Henry IV." is "spoken by a dancer."

favourite of the crowd, and he took so many liberties, interrupted so noisily with his jokes the gravest dramas, that authors, Shakespeare for one, deplored such excesses without being able to confine these irrepressible praters within reasonable bounds.

The famous Tarleton, an ever-ready jester, who had more than once the honour of making the Queen laugh with his strong-spiced jokes, was in his day the pride of the Theatre. Before he had even opened his mouth, says Nash, "the people began exceedingly to laugh, when Tarleton first peept out his head."¹ Kemp after him, a dancer and indefatigable improviser, shone among Shakespeare's companions, and was the Peter of "Romeo and Juliet," the Dogberry of "Much Ado." The jigs which he danced at the end of the plays, with an accompaniment of comical songs, cheered and delighted the audience²: "*Angli in saltationibus et arte musica excellent,*" wrote Hentzner, in his note-book.³ Armin, Wilson, and others whose natural gifts recalled the wit and inventions of the Gringalet, Turlupin and Gaultier Garguille of the French stage, also reached fame as "farceurs." The crowd was so fond of their "extemporal wit" that sometimes an entire performance was made up of their drolleries. One of them would occasionally act alone a whole play and be "all himselfe, king, gentleman, clowne

¹ "Pierce Penilesse," 1592; Shakesp. Soc. 1842, p. 36. He died in 1588; he is supposed to be the Yorick Hamlet alludes to. Sidney stood godfather to his son Philip (S. Lee, "Great Englishmen," p. 90).

² He was, for a time, a member of those English companies of players who visited the Continent. He doubled his reputation in dancing his famous morris from London to Norwich. The feat was performed in twenty-three days, during nine of which he danced on the road. He was received in triumph by the mayor and all the citizens, and granted a life pension of forty shillings: a notable sign of the importance at that time of all that was show and amusement. This feat was made the subject of ballads, and Kemp himself gave an account of it in his "Nine daies Wonder," 1600; Camden Society, 1840.

³ "Itinerarium," 1612, p. 156.

and all: having spoken for one, he would sodainely goe in, and againe retorne for the other.”¹ Or they would challenge each other to try who could best improvise and be funniest, find the sharpest retorts, rime the cleverest verses, for three hours at a stretch; and the multitude flew to these “trials of wit.” Wilson, who was, he too, at one time, a member of Shakespeare’s troupe, won enduring fame in a competition of this sort.² John Taylor, the Thames waterman and poet, the “water poet” as he chose to call himself, has left an account of the disaster which befell him when, Fennor and he having challenged each other to a trial of wit, his adversary refrained from appearing. The crowd hooted Taylor, who came forth alone and was quite innocent: the usual justice of irritated crowds.³

Fencers, tumblers and singers also had their importance; audiences were fond of their exercises and of their music, and dramatists multiplied accordingly in their plays, duels, songs, “sennets” and “solemn” symphonies—“I pray you, quoth Ratsey,” addressing his same strolling players, “let me heare your musicke, for I have often gone to plaies more for musicke sake then for action.”⁴ Shakespeare had, at one time, among his fellow-players, a clown with a fine voice, and gave him as many occasions as he could, in “All’s Well,” in “Twelfth Night,” to gain the approval of those among the audience who shared Ratsey’s tastes. Five or six songs are allotted to him in “Twelfth Night,” one of them of five stanzas.

When in the country or abroad, strolling companies had the greatest need of their tumblers to insure success. In

¹ Armin, “Nest of Ninnies,” 1608; Shakespeare Society, 1842.

² “Our witty Wilson . . . for learning and extemporal wit . . . is without compare . . . as to his great and eternal commendations, he manifested in his challenge at the *Swan* on the Bankside” (Rob. Wilson, the elder, d. 1600).—Mere’s “*Palladis Tamia*,” 1598; in Arber, “*English Garner*,” ii. 102.

³ “Taylor’s Revenge,” 1615.

⁴ “Ratseis Ghoaste,” as above, p. 74, 1605 (?).

all lands, at this period, roving dispositions were manifested by troupes of players; they swarmed everywhere throughout Europe: French ones are found in Germany, Italian ones in Paris and London (one accompanied Elizabeth during her progress in the year 1574¹); Spanish and English ones in France,² English ones in Germany and Denmark. In the latter country, several actors who belonged afterwards to the same company as Shakespeare played before King Frederick II. at Elsinore. Partially understood at best, by audiences who could barely follow the general drift of the drama, and admire the actors' gesticulations, English companies were able, at least, to please by the agility of their acrobats and the music of their singers.³ The passport delivered to one of these companies going to the Continent in 1591 states that the members of the same will exhibit, on the way, "their talents in music, feats of agility, and plays of the comical, tragical, or historical kind."⁴ They will, declares a German Duke, in the articles by which he attaches to his person some English actors (among whom Pope, the clown), "play music, and amuse and entertain us also with their art in leaping and other graceful things that they have learnt," 1586.⁵

¹ Feuillerat, "Documents relating to the Revels," p. 225.

² Years 1598 ff. See "Shakespeare in France," pp. 50 ff.

³ According to Fynes Moryson, actors proper would, in such cases, interest their German hearers merely by their gesture: "I remember that when some of our cast despised Stage players came out of England into Germany, and played at Franckford in the tyme of the Mart, having nether a complete number of actours, nor any good apparell, nor any ornament of the stage," which, in any case, shows that in England they had such ornaments, "yet the Germans, not understanding a worde they sayde, both men and wemen, flocked wonderfully to see their gesture and action, rather then heare them speaking English which they understoode not."—Hughes, "Shakespeare's Europe, unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary," London, 1903, p. 304; cf. below, p. 489.

⁴ ". . . Et allantz en leur dict voyage, d'exercer leurs qualitez en fait de musique, agilitez et joeuz de commedies, tragedies et histories."—Cohn, "Shakespeare in Germany," 1865, 4to, p. xxviii.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. xxvi.

But companies could pride themselves also upon real tragedians, who had taken their art and profession in earnest and had studied it from their infancy. These thoroughly entered into the spirit of their parts, they suited their gestures to the words, and by their knowledge and dignity stood a living contrast to the scurrilities of clowns and jesters. Such men there were as Richard Burbage (son of old Burbage who had built the Theatre), reputed the Roscius of his day, wanted by all dramatists for their new plays, and who was Shakespeare's Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Richard III.; or Field whom Jonson considered another Burbage, Alleyn of magnificent presence,¹ another Roscius, said Nash, able to transform, by his acting, a bad play into a successful drama. He was Marlowe's Faust, Tamburlaine and Jew of Malta, and played "the last act of his life so well"² that he is even better known as a public benefactor than as an actor.

There can be no doubt as to the high proficiency of these companies of players. It was as great, perhaps greater than to-day, for the reason that whereas London has now no school or "conservatoire" for the teaching of histrionic arts, comedians were formerly, in a larger proportion than at present, born to the trade, had played from their early youth, being actors' sons or pages (boys) and employed first in women's parts; or having been children of the Chapel Royal or of St. Paul's.³ Burbage

¹ See his full-length portrait at Dulwich, reproduced *e.g.* in Mantzius, "Skuespilkunstens Historie," Copenhagen, 1901, vol. ii. p. 197. Jonson greatly admired him:

'Tis just that who did give
So many poets life, by one should live.

Epigr. lxxxix.

² Bacon to Buckingham ("Letters," Spedding, vi. 324), objecting however to the patent for the foundation of his college, August 18, 1618; but his opposition was overruled.

³ The before quoted petition of the Burbages (above, p. 77, n. 2) shows how, "in processe of time," the more proficient among these children became "men players."

was the son of an actor, Field had made his *début* in a children's troupe. The excellence of English actors then was undoubted. Englishmen were proud of it, but grieved that this merit, as well as all the glories of their literature, should, despite the comedians' journeys abroad, remain unrecognised on the Continent. Nash sneers at a performance of "Acolastus" at Wittenberg, where the actors gesticulated so madly that "it was mightily dreaded that [they] woulde strike the candles that hung above theyr heades out of their sockets, and leave them all darke."¹ "Our players," he said elsewhere, "are not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squirting baudie comedians, that have whores and common curtezans to play womens parts. . . . Our sceane is more stately furnisht than ever it was in the time of Roscius," and as Europe is unaware of it, he will write a book in Latin to open its eyes.² The innumerable allusions in the contemporary drama, Hamlet's famous advice to the players at Elsinore,³ the recommendations of Kemp and Burbage, who appear under their own name in the "Returne from Parnassus," and give lessons to Cambridge students, show how

¹ In "Jack Wilton"; "Works," Grosart, vol. v. p. 71.

² "Pierce Penilesse," 1592; "Works," ii. 92.

³ Hamlet's teaching is Shakespeare's teaching. We know from other sources that authors, those especially who were also players, would take great pains to have their works properly interpreted. Herrick ("Hesperides," 383) describes the change that came over the stage when Ben Jonson was no longer there to supervise actors:

For men did strut and stride, and stare, not act;
Then temper flew from words; and men did squeake,
Look red, and blow and bluster, but not speake.

From Herrick's statement we may gather that Shakespeare and Jonson's teachings were very much alike. Hamlet wanted actors to "acquire and beget a temperance" (Herrick's "temper"), and he forbade them to blow and bluster: "o'erstep the modesty of nature . . . o'erdoing Termagant." The grandiloquence of "stalking-stumping" players is also derided in the "Puritain Widdow," 1607; Brooke, "Shakespeare Apocrypha," p. 239.

greatly histrionic art had been perfected. Nothing was left any longer to chance ; gestures, attitudes, delivery were studied beforehand, duly rehearsed and adapted to the occasion ; the strolling tragedian whom Hamlet entertains at Elsinore changes colour and weeps true tears at the thought of Hecuba's misfortunes. "It is a good sport in a party" says Kemp, deriding beginners, "to see them never speake in their walke, but at the end of the stage, just as though, in walking with a fellow, we should never speake but at a stile, a gate or a ditch, where a man can go no further."¹ Thomas Heywood notes, a few years later, that plays of all sorts were represented at the University, which had many advantages : "It not onely emboldens a scholler to speake, but instructs him to speake well . . . to keepe a decorum in his countenance . . . to fit his phrases to his action, and his action to his phrase, and his pronounciation to them both." Many other faults are enumerated, which students avoid by learning to act, and which, to all appearances, would have not been tolerated then by a London audience.²

Compared with actors, the fate of authors who were only authors was worthy of pity, and few are known who, having no other trade, could fairly succeed in life. They exchanged, Dekker said, "that light commodity of words for a lighter ware than words : *plaudites*."³ Dramatic talent being then abundant, competition keen, and profit small, fame was in proportion difficult to attain. Among the swarm of playwrights nothing harder than to rise above the average level. Scarcely any of the authors of those days, Shakespeare no more than the others, occupied in the estimation of their contemporaries the same rank as in ours. The objectionable *milieu* of the

¹ "Returne from Parnassus," 2nd part, 1601, act iv. sc. 3, ed. Macray.

² "Apology for Actors," 1612 ; Shakespeare Society, 1841, p. 29.

³ "Guls Horne-Book," chap. vi.

playhouse, the low kinds of entertainments alternating there with the most admirable dramas or sometimes introduced into them, the disorders and vulgarities of the pit, maintained a general prejudice against dramatic art: a very powerful art, people thought, and the most captivating of all, but, even in the eyes of its partisans, a second-rate one, the products of which could not rank with ample poems, ingenious eclogs, or a fine sequence of sonnets. Many men who did not miss a performance, were ashamed of their fondness, as of a foible. In the same satire where he extols the merits of Spenser, Hall shows nothing but contempt for all the dramatists of his time, and these included Marlowe and Shakespeare.¹

An author sold the manuscript of his play and it became the absolute property of the purchaser. If he sold it twice, first to the "Queen's Players . . . for twenty nobles, and when they were in the country . . . to the Lord Admirals men for as much more," this was considered bad manners and, indeed, plain "cony-catching."² But the company who had paid for the text could do with it what it pleased, play it much or not, sell it, let it for hire to another troupe, ask another poet to mend it, as it would have caused its great royal coat to be mended or its hell-mouth to be painted afresh. Jonson, for a price agreed

¹ Book i. sat. iii. 1597. "Romeo," "Midsummer," "Richard III." had already been performed. Spenser had made, at an earlier date, the Muses of tragedy and comedy describe their state: "Men," Melpomene said,

Banish us, that patronize
The name of learning.

Thalia said:

Scoffing scurrilitie
And scornfull Follie with contempt is crept,
Rolling in rymes of shameles ribaudrie.

"Teares of the Muses," 1591.

² Which is what Greene had done, according to "A Defence of Cony Catching," 1592; Greene's "Orlando Furioso," ed. Greg, Malone Society, 1907, p. vii.

upon beforehand, alters Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy"; Dekker does the same with Marlowe's "Faustus." The manuscripts of plays figured, as a matter of course, in the inventories of the various companies, with the costumes and properties belonging to them. The Lord Admiral's men possessed, in 1598, twenty-nine plays, the titles of which are given in the inventory of their goods, but the names of the authors omitted, as of no interest.¹ Henslowe was a broker in plays as well as in cloaks and costumes; he purchased manuscripts on chance and re-sold them with a large profit. An author would promise not to tell the company the price he had received, so that Henslowe might charge it double to his players.² His prices varied usually from six to ten pounds, being, by exception, lowered to four or five, or raised to twenty.³ Such differences were considerable, no doubt, but successful authors began to be exacting. These were not always the men of greatest genius; they were sometimes high-talkers, capable of dazzling the old money-lender and making him believe in their talent; or they were, more usually, rimesters who knew how to season the crowd's favourite dishes and who introduced into their plays more murders, madmen, and ghosts than the others. You are an actor and want to succeed? Here comes the fashionable

¹ "Henslowe Papers," p. 121.

² "Neather did I acquaint the company with any mony I had of yow."—Daborne to Henslowe, "Henslowe Papers," p. 76. And elsewhere: "which I wil undertake shall make as good a play for y^r publi^c howse as ever was playd, for which I desyre but ten pounds, and I will undertake upon the reading it your company shall giv y^e 20*l*. rather than part with it."—The same to the same, December 9, 1613, *ibid.* p. 79.

³ This last price is obtained by Daborne, one of the scribblers who best knew how to manage Henslowe; he received it in consideration of a play on Machiavel and the Devil (Belphegor?)—"Matchavil and ye divill," writes the money-lender.—"Henslowe Papers," p. 67, year 1613. "Twenty pounds a-play" had been mentioned by Jonson some fifteen years before as an impossible price: "The Case is Altered," played in 1598 or 1599, i. 1.

author: "Rascal, to him, cherish his Muse, go; thou hast forty shillings? . . . give him in earnest, do, he shall write for thee, slave! If he pen for thee once, thou shalt not need to travel with thy pumps full of gravel any more, after a blind jade and a hamper, and stalk upon boards and barrel heads, to an old cracked trumpet."¹

Contrarily to players, in receipt of continuous wages, authors (when they had not spent in advance the price agreed upon), got their due in a lump sum, drank deep, ate more than their fill, and went on revelling till they found themselves again penniless. "Thou art very poor," says one of the characters in a play of Marston's—"As Job, an alchymist or a poet," the other answers.² These lump payments were their destruction; they began again to write with feverish haste, in partnership with two, three, five of their peers, and in the meantime implored advance fees from Henslowe, who often yielded to their importunities, out of pity some believed; rather, others said, because his maxim was: "Should these fellows come out of my debt, I should have noe rule with them."³

The correspondence of one of the starving purveyors of his playhouses, Daborne, has come down to us, and shows to the life the kind of men such playwrights were, and the kind of existence they led. Always ready to write, readier to beg, ever soliciting twenty shillings, ten shillings, each occasion being the very last and being caused by unforeseen and pressing circumstances, sending daughter and wife to mollify the old broker, swearing by nothing less than his "ffayth and Christianyty," vouching that the masterpiece is finished, or nearly so, and will prove an unexampled success,

¹ Ben Jonson, "The Poetaster," iii. 1.

² "The Malcontent," iii. 1; printed 1604.

³ "Articles of grievance," 1615; "Henslowe Papers," p. 89.

Daborne might have figured with honour in Mürger's "*Vie de Bohême*." One characteristic, however, is quite striking and quite of his day, namely, his fecundity. He writes ceaselessly, finishes hurriedly, begins again at once, busy with two dramas at a time: "If you doe not like this play when it is read, you shall hav the other, which shall be finished with all expedition; for before God, this is a good one, and will giv you content . . . and I pray send me ten shillings, and take these papers, which wants but one short scean of the whole play." He writes on and on, and for all his haste, is behindhand: "Mr. Hinchlow [Henslowe], you accuse me with the breach of promise. Trew it is, I promysd to bring you the last scean, which that you may see finished I send you the foule sheet and the fayr I was wrighting, as your man can testify; which if great busines had not prevented, I had this night fynished."¹ Another trait is also Daborne's own and places him apart among heroes of the "Bohemian" country: while patching with rimes, alone or in conjunction with Tourneur and others, his dramatic lucubrations, he was dreaming of a more secure calling, and of all callings possible, the church; and he reached his end, took orders, preached sermons, printed one of them, and died Dean of Lismore in 1628.

Once possessed of the "books" or manuscript plays, produced sometimes by a Daborne and sometimes by a Shakespeare, companies of actors did their best to protect themselves against printers, than whom they knew no more mischievous beings. A play when printed could be appropriated by a rival company; enormous penalties were inscribed therefore in players' agreements: "And that no man of the said company shall, at any time, put into print any play-book now in use, or that hereafter shall be sold unto them," under pain of a forty pounds

¹ "Henslowe Papers," pp. 68 ff.

fine, the exclusion from the company and the loss of all rights in the common stock.¹ The printing of plays, formerly the property of their company, became for several actors a means of livelihood when the theatres were closed by the Puritans in 1642.²

The cession by authors of all their rights, the carefulness with which companies kept the plays from printers so long as they had success, and the carelessness with which they cast them away afterwards, the subordinate character attributed by common consent to dramatic art, contributed to cause the incredible destruction of plays which we know to have happened. Though, as compared to other countries, England can show to-day a prodigious number of dramas belonging to this period, they are only a small portion of the mass which was rimed, learnt, performed and applauded in London. More than three-fourths of the plays mentioned by Henslowe are lost; out of forty-nine written by Chettle, alone or with others, only five were printed; of Daborne's numerous productions only two remain.³

Those London theatres, the number of which was a unique phenomenon in Europe, were day after day filled with spectators; "our thronged theatres" is a common expression of the period.⁴ To go to the play, citizens,

¹ Articles of Agreement of March 10, 160[8], concerning the Whitefriars Theatre. See Greenstreet, "Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society," November 9, 1888, p. 271.

² "Some picked up a little money by publishing the copies of plays . . . kept in manuscript."—"Historia Histrionica," 1699, in Dodsley's "Old Plays," ed. Hazlitt, vol. xv. Such was the case with the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, printed in 1647, and dedicated by ten players to Philip, Earl of Pembroke (the one who figured as Earl of Montgomery in Shakespeare's first folio), with a preface by Shirley; below, p. 431. Cf. the interesting details given by Sidney Lee in his "Shakespeare's . . . First folio," in facsimile, Oxford, 1902, pp. xii ff.

³ On Daborne's plays, see Swaen, in "Anglia," vols. xx. and xxi.

⁴ "Our thronged theatres," Drayton, "Idea," sonnet 47.—"This thronged round," Ben Jonson, "Every Man out of his Humour," Induction.—"The

shopkeepers, sailors, soldiers, tradesmen, visitors from the provinces, always found the needful time and money. Mere craftsmen and apprentices¹ came in crowds, neglecting their work: for performances took place in the daytime, and began at three in the afternoon. Citizens of modest means, who dined at twelve at the ordinary for "three-halfpenny," being served "with hot Monsieur Mutton and porridge"; gallants, prodigals, well-to-do gentlemen who frequented "some famous tavern as the Horn, the Mitre or the Mermaid," where they paid eighteenpence for stewed mutton, goose, and woodcock,² strolled after their meal towards St. Paul's, stepped for a moment into a bookseller's shop, and discussed the new work just out; if they could not read, they went in all the same, they smoked and looked wise.³ Then by a natural and almost instinctive move, they took their way towards the theatres. Shall we do this or that, says a character in a comedy by Rowlands,

Or shall we to the Globe and see a play?⁴

Let us.—When they saw the daily contingent of theatre-goers appear at the Thames stairs, the watermen, innumer-

common people who rejoyse to be at playes and enterludes," Puttenham (?), "Arte of English Poesie," 1589, ed. Arber, p. 96.—"If you resort to the Theatre and Curtayne and other places of playes in the citie, you shall, on the Lords Day, have these places so full as possible they can throng." Sermon by Stockwood, 1578, Arber, Introduction to Gosson's "Schoole of Abuse," p. 9.

¹ A Londoner "rebukes not his [apprentice] for resorting to playes."—Gosson, "Apologie of the Schoole of Abuse," ed. Arber, p. 71.

² Middleton, "Father Hubburds Tales," 1604; "Works," ed. Bullen, vol. viii. pp. 77, 80.

³ Particulars supplied by Dekker, "Guls Horne-Book," 1609, and by Middleton, "Father Hubburds Tales," 1604, where an allusion is made to "the running a tilt of wits in booksellers' shops" in St. Paul's Churchyard.

⁴ "The Letting of Humours Blood," 1600.

able along the river, filled the air with their clamours, offered their services, "howling and hallowing."¹ They surrounded the would-be passenger, almost carried him away. A general crossing of the water began, to the noise of thousands of oars, and the "roaring" of the gallants who showed their importance by the bigness of their oaths: "Row, row, row, a pox on you, row!"

A crowd equal to the population of a middle-sized town was crossing the water at the same time. The watermen, who had worked "till they had not a dry thread about them," stopped at the stairs on Bankside, near the theatres, and the time for reckoning having come, the noise grew louder. Passengers offered the tariff price with scarce any little surplus as a "bounty": for they were not ashamed to spend their money on women, tobacco, or wine rather than on their watermen—writes a waterman. The oarsmen loudly remonstrated, objecting that the "statute was made in Queen Mary's reign for our fares, and the price of all things is raised, except poor men's labours." An exchange of "unreverend speeches" took place²: which speeches, oaths and arguments, handed down from generation to generation, and from watermen to cabmen, have not ceased to do duty when needed.

Once disembarked the crowd divided, and moved, according to inclination, towards one or the other of the

¹ W. Rowley, "A Search for Money," 1603; Percy Society, 1840, p. 31.

² Informations given by the "water poet" or waterman John Taylor, in his "True Cause of the Watermen's suit concerning Players," 1613 or 1614. The watermen complained of a new tendency of actors to leave Bankside and to play more habitually in the city. You might as well ask, the players answered, the removal of "the Exchange, the walks in Pauls or Moorfield to the Bankside for your profits."—*Ibid.* A petition of the watermen had greatly contributed in 1592(?) to the reopening of the Rose. We had used to have, they declared, "muchel helpe and reliefe for us, our poore wives and children by meanes of the resorte of suche people as come unto the said playe howse."—"Henslowe Papers," p. 42.

different theatres. The day's spectacle was announced by means of bills nailed on posts :

Go, read each post, view what is play'd to-day.¹

"I pray, S^r," Daborne writes to Henslowe, "let y^e boy giv order this night to the stage-keep[er] to set up bills against munday for *Eastward Hoe*, and one wendsday, the new play."² The "gatherer" at the door of the theatre had also one of these bills in his hand, others were posted within the house: "The title of this play is *Cynthia's Revels*, as any man that has hope to be saved by his book can witness."³ Men of so much learning would convey the information to their neighbours. There was good reason not to neglect glancing at such bills, for on certain days, at the Hope for example (late Bear Garden), a bull or bear baiting might be given instead of a drama. These cruel pastimes, in which a wretched bear tied to a post, his eyes in certain games previously put out, fought against dogs ("quos lingua vernacula *Docken* appellat," says Hentzner) or was whipped by stable grooms, always drew large crowds. "Fight dog ! Fight beare !" the public shouted ;⁴ even women came in numbers

¹ Marston, "Satires," 1598 ; "Works," ed. Bullen, vol. iii. p. 302. Cf. in "Bartholomew Fair" the puppet-play scene, v. 3.

² "Henslowe Papers," p. 71.

³ Ben Jonson, "Cynthia's Revels," Induction. When the play within the play is about to begin in the "Spanish Tragedy," Hieronimo having ascertained that Balthazar is ready says :

Well doon, Balthazar, hang up the title :
Our scene is Rhodes. (iv. 3.)

Works of Kyd, ed. Boas, 1901, p. 89. The list of "Properties" for the "Faery Pastorall," ed. Haslewood, Roxburghe Club, 1824, p. 94, begins thus : "Highest, aloft, on the top of the Musick Tree, the title, *The Faery Pastorall*, beneath him, pind on the post of the tree, the scene, Elvida Forrest."

⁴ W. Rowley, "A Search for Money," 1609 ; Percy Society, 1840, p. 30.

to see the sight, and Shakespeare alludes to their shrieks when Sackerson, one of the most famous bears of the time, broke his chain.¹ A "Royal game" it was, as we know, a sport for a king; on important occasions, the "Master of the Royal game" was commanded to Whitehall, and caused his animals to be torn to pieces before the windows of the palace, for the amusement of the court. Such a diversion was offered to Christian IV. when the Danish monarch visited his brother-in-law James I. Nothing was spared in these cases, and the bears were harried to death. The fact is of importance and must not be lost sight of when studying the drama of the period: writers had to please the same public as bearwards. "To see," we read in a satirical poem where all these pastimes are placed on the same line:

A foolish engine move alone,
A morris dance, a puppet-play . . .
A woman dancing on a rope,
Bull-baiting also at the Hope .
Or players acting on the stage,—
There goes the bounty of our age :
 But unto any pious notion
 There's little coin and less devotion."

¹ "Merry Wives," i. 1. Another allusion to those games, obviously familiar to Shakespeare, is in "Macbeth," v. 1; like the tied bear, Macbeth cannot leave the place:

I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course;

which matches exactly Hentzner's description of the hideous pastime: "Accedit aliquando in fine hujus spectaculi [that is, after the usual baiting] ursi plane excæcati flagellatio, ubi quinque vel sex in circulo constituti, ursum flagellis misere excipiunt, qui licet alligatus, aufugere nequeat, alacriter tamen se defendit et nimium appropinquantes, nisi recte et provide sibi caveant, prosternit." What seems to be an original placard announcing such an entertainment is preserved at Dulwich: "And for your better content shall have plasant sport with the horse and ape, and whipping of the blind beare."—"Henslowe Papers," p. 106.

² H. Farley, "St. Paul's Church," 1621, in Bullen, "Poems from Romances . . . of the Elizabethan Age," 1890, p. 83.

The stage filled with those gallants described by Dekker, who came and sat "on the very rushes" which did duty for carpet, "yea, and under the state of *Cambyeses* himself."¹ They came "to see and be seen," said Jonson, "to make a general muster of themselves in their clothes of credit,"² loudly proclaimed what they thought of the play, shrugged their shoulders if, by chance, the author recommended virtue, and left noisily before the performance was finished.³ "If I could but see a piece," says Fitzdottrel,

Come but to one act, and I did not care,
But to be seen to rise and go away,
To vex the players and punish their poet,
Keep him in awe !⁴

The galleries filled ; even in the lords' room, "much new satin was smothered to death." The yard or pit especially swarmed with a noisy, restless, ill-flavoured crowd. This last characteristic being apparently the most notable supplied the usual nickname for the frequenters of the pit and upper galleries. They were called the stinkards ; sometimes too, groundlings, or penny-knaves ; the playhouse glossary had for them no flattering terms.⁵

¹ Each assertion of Dekker is confirmed by Jonson, Day and other contemporary dramatists. On Dekker's gallant, see above, I. p. 549.

² Preface of "The New Inn."

³ "Well, Ile sit out the play . . . but see it be baudy, or by this light, I and all my friends will hisse."—J. Day, "The Ile of Guls," 1606. Same noisy gentlemen on the stage in France, up to the eighteenth century : "*Isabelle*.—Ces jeunes officiers sont faits exprès pour mon humeur ; ils font toujours quelques singeries ; ils chantent, ils cabriolent, ils se battent quelquefois pour rire et se baissent après devant tout le monde ; enfin quand je les vois sur le théâtre, ils me divertissent cent fois plus que la comédie."—"Les Chinois," i. 5, by Regnard and Dufreny, 1692.

⁴ Ben Jonson, "The Devil is an Ass," iii. 1, performed in 1616.

⁵ "Your groundling and gallery commoner . . . your stinkard" (Dekker). "A dull audience of stinkards sitting in the penny galleries" (Middleton). Jonson alludes, in the Induction of "Bartholomew Fair," to the terrible smell of the Hope Theatre (alternately used for dramas and for bear baitings) where

Spectators drank beer and wine, ate apples, nuts and pears; the sale of these was authorised and the partition of the receipts was mentioned in sharers' agreements.¹ But, above all, people smoked. "In all their places of amusement and in fact wherever they are, the English," writes Hentzner, "almost ceaselessly use of the Nicotian herb called by them in the American language *Tabaca*, and by others *Petun*,² doing it in this fashion: at the lower end of an earthen tube they place some of the said herb, very dry, so that it may easily be reduced into powder; fire being brought, they light it, and then they draw the smoke through the upper part of the tube into their mouth, and they cast it out through their nostrils as from a funnel."³ Gallants on the stage were conspicuous by their smoking capacities. "Fie!" says the citizen's wife in the "Knight of the Burning Pestle," "this stinking tobacco

his play is being represented: "The author hath observed a special decorum, the place being as dirty as Smithfield, and as stinking every whit." Lodge declared that he would write no more for the stage, no more—

. . tie my pen to pennie-knave's delight.

"Scillaes Metamorphosis."

¹ Articles of March 10, 1608, concerning the Whitefriars Theatre (Greenstreet, "Transactions of the New Shakspeare Soc.," November 9, 1888, p. 271) enumerating: "wine, beer, ale, tobacco, wood, coals or any such commodity." "Circumferuntur insuper in hisce theatris varii fructus venales, ut poma, pyra, nuces et pro ratione temporis etiam vinum et cervisia."—Hentzner, "Itinerarium," ed. 1612, p. 131, describing what he saw in 1598.

² An appellation long in use, though now forgotten. Rhadamantes is especially severe,

Aux faux béats, aux hypocrites;
Quand il en attrape quelqu'un,
De leur chair il fait du petun
Et ce petun le déconstipe,
N'en auroit-il pris qu'une pipe.

Scarron, "Virgile Travesti."

"*Petun*, tabac; on ne s'en sert que par raillerie: c'est un preneur de petun."—Gattel, "Dictionnaire Français," Lyon, 1819.

³ "Itinerarium," Nurenberg, 1612, p. 131

kills me . . . what good does [it] do you? . . . make chimneys o' your faces!" A great deal apparently, for they were scarcely seated than they drew from their pockets their smoking implements: "I have my three sorts of tobacco in my pocket," says one of the "genteel auditors" at "Cynthia's Revels," "my light by me, and thus I begin."—He smokes.¹ It is hard to say whether all this smoking aggravated or extenuated the flavours exhaled by the "stinkards," the neighbouring kennels, the bear cages and the bull stables.

The performances were attended by women, many among them of the least reputable kind, an outpouring of the neighbouring taverns or of houses of even worse fame: "strumpets that follow theatres," says Middleton; "harlots," says another, "who presse to the fore-frunt of the scaffoldes [at the Theatre] . . . to be as an object to al mens eies."² But there were also some of a different sort, even in the pit among the "stinkards,"³ more usually however seated in the galleries. "To-day" says Fitzdottrel—

To-day I go to the Blackfriars play-house,
Sit in the view, salute all my acquaintance;
The ladies ask, who's that? for they do come
To see us, love, as we do to see them.⁴

¹ Ben Jonson, "Cynthia's Revels," 1600, Induction.

² "A second and third Blast of retrait from Plaies . . . by Anglo-phile Eutheo," 1580; Hazlitt, "English Drama and Stage," 1869, p. 139. The same at the Curtain and elsewhere: "And little thought I, madam, that the camp had been supplied with harlots as well as the Curtain."—Middleton, "Works," Bullen, viii. 90. Marlowe numbers among the rites of Venus:

Plays, masques, and all that that stern age counteth evil.

"Hero and Leander," Sestiad 1.

³ Among other proofs (pointed out by Mr. Daniel): "The citizen, his wife, and Ralph sitting below [the stage], among the audience."—"Knight of the Burning Pestle," Induction.

⁴ "Devil is an Ass," by Jonson, i. 3.

Gosson advises "gentle-women" not to go to theatres : from which we may conclude that they went. If you desire to refresh your spirits, he tells them, do not visit the playhouse, but rather "passe the time with your neigbours in sober conference," or with a book, "if you can read."¹ But the "enchantments" of such places already at that early date, before Shakespeare, before Marlowe, before Greene even, had written any of their plays, were too strong to be resisted : "None can come within those snares," writes a censor in 1580, "that maie escape untaken, be she maide, matrone or whatsoever, such force have their enchantments of pleasure to drawe the affections of the mind." What would seem to us, readers of to-day, unbearably dull or ridiculous, appealed irresistibly to those sensitive, new-opened minds and hearts, a fact well worthy of note, on account of its literary consequences. "They which are evil disposed, no sooner heare anie thing spoken [on the stage] that maie serve their turne, but they applie it unto them selves. 'Alas,' saie they to their familiar by them, 'Gentle-woman, is it not pittie this passioned lover should be so martyred?' And if he find her inclining to foolish pittie, as commonlie such women are, then he applies the matter to himselfe, and saies that he is likewise caried awaie with the liking of her, craving that pittie to be extended to him as she seemed to showe toward the afflicted amorous stager."²

Taken as a whole the audience was surely a very mixed one ; bad acquaintances were easily formed, and puritans had fair cause for remonstrance. "In the playhouses at

¹ "Schoole of Abuse," 1579, ed. Arber, p. 60.

² "A second and third Blast of retrait from Plaies and Theaters . . . set forth by Anglo-phile Eutheo," 1580, in Hazlitt, "English Drama and Stage," 1869, p. 142. The author constantly lays stress on the fact that he speaks from personal experience and has heard and seen all he describes ; and the same "maie be affirmed by hundreds to whome those matters are as wel knownen as to my selfe" (p. 125).

London," wrote Gosson again, "it is the fashion of youtnes to go first into the yarde, and to carry theire eye through every gallery ; then, like unto ravens, where they spye the carrion thither they flye, and presse as nere to y^e fairest as they can . . . they give them pippines, they dally with their garments to passe y^e time, they minister talke upon al accasions, and eyther bring them home to theire houses on small acquaintance or slip into taverns when y^e plaies are done." ¹

To these remarks of puritan Gosson, players answered that theatres received also another sort of visitors, namely, Puritans who concealed themselves in corners :

Thou that do'st raile at me for seeing a play,
How wouldst thou have me spend my idle houres?
Wouldst have me in a taverne drinke all day,
Melt in the sunne's heate, or walke in showers? . . .
I am no open saint and secret varlet.
Still, when I come to playes, I love to sit
That all may see me in a publike place,
Even in the stages front, and not to git
Into a nooke, and hood-winke there my face.²

All dramatists agreed, and proclaimed that the best thing people could do, when they did not know what to do, was to go to the play: "For whereas," said Nash, "the after-noone beeing the idlest time of the day, wherein men that are their owne masters . . . do wholly bestow themselves upon pleasure, and that pleasure they deuide (howe vertuously it skills not) either into gameing, following of harlots, drinking or seeing a playe, is it not then better . . . that they should betake them to the least which is playes? Nay, what if I proove playes to be . . . a rare exercise of vertue?" and he proves it, of course, showing

¹ "Playes confuted in Five Actions," of uncertain date, but later than 1581.

² Lines by Richard Perkins, prefacing Heywood's "Apology for Actors," 1612.

that they teach nothing but honour, courage, generosity, honesty. "As for the hindrance of trades and traders of the citie by them, that is an article foysted in by the Vintners, Ale-wives and Victuallers, who surmise if there were no playes, they should have all the companie that resort to them, lye bowzing and beere-bathing in their houses every after-noone." ¹

Moralists, city magistrates, divines "who deeme[d] it no more cunning to wryte an exquisite poem than to preach pure Calvin," ² remained stubborn, and from the beginning of the reign to the time when the Puritans carried the day and closed the theatres, the quarrel continued the same. "Wyll not a fylthye playe, with the blast of a trumpette, sooner call thyther a thousande, than an houre's tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred?" mournfully inquired one of the "pure Calvin" preachers.³ "Such laughing and fleering, such kissing and bussing in these unholy places!" exclaimed Stubbes.⁴ Nothing moved by Nash's eloquence, the Common Council of London continued to recommend the suppression of theatres, while the Privy Council, the principal members of which had their own companies of players, pretended to yield, assented to suppressions which were not enforced, that of the Curtain, for example, in 1597,⁵ and cooled the Lord Mayor's zeal, saying: "In respecte that her Majestie somtymes taketh delight in those pastymes, their lordships thincke it not unfitte . . . to allow of certen companies of players to exercise their playing in London partely to the ende they might thereby

¹ Nash, "Pierce Penilesse," 1592; "Works," McKerrow, 1904, vol. i. pp. 212, 214.

² *Ibid.* p. 192.

³ Sermon (see Gosson, "Schoole of Abuse," Arber, p. 9) at St. Paul's Cross, 1578, by J. Stockwood, one of those translators of Beza and other continental divines derided by Nash.

⁴ "Anatomie of Abuses," 1583, ed. Furnivall, i. p. 144.

⁵ "Acts of the Privy Council," order of July 28th, prescribing the "defacing" of "anie common playhouse," and especially the "Curtayne theatre." All, however, survived.

attaine to the more perfectyon and dexteritie in that professyon the rather to content her Majestie." ¹ To which there was nothing to reply, and actors went on playing as before.

The trumpet sounded for the third time; the actors made sure that they had "good strings to [their] beards" ²; a player, "the Prologue," who had, "by rubbing, got colour into his cheeks" (Dekker), came from behind the arras, walked forth, in his flowing robes, to the front of the stage, and commended to the kindly disposition of the public the play, the players, and the author. He tried to "calme" the "murmuring breath" of the multitude; often also he explained what the play was about, recalled its title and stated where the scene was laid.³ The performance began,

¹ "Acts of the Privy Council," May 20, 1582; new series, vol. xiii. The most remarkable example of unenforced injunctions is that of 1597, when the Privy Council wrote to the Justices of Middlesex that: "Her Majestie being informed that there are verie greate disorders committed in the common play houses both by lewd matters that are handled on the stages and by resorte and confluence of bad people, hath given direction that "no play shall be performed "in any publique place" for some time, and "those playhouses that are erected and built only for suche purposes shalbe plucked downe, namelie the Curtayne and the Theatre nere to Shorditch or any other within that county." But in this very order the Council's disposition to relent is apparent, for after having prescribed the destruction of the theatres themselves, mention is made further on, only of the plucking "downe quite [of] the stages, gallories and roomes that are made for people to stand in." Same letter to the Justices of Surrey for a similar destruction of the "playhouses in the Banckside in Southwark"; but in neither region were any of the theatres destroyed at all. (July 28, 1597; new series, vol. xxvii. p. 313.)

² "Midsummer Night's Dream," iv. 2.

³ Prologue to the "Merry Devil of Edmonton," 1st ed. 1608; e.g. in Brooke, "Shakespeare Apocrypha," 1908; part of the "Presenter," in Peele's "Battell of Alcazar," printed 1594, below, p. 126. Similar uses on the early Italian and French stages; see, for example, the "Avant-jeu" of Grévin's "Les Esbahis," 1st performed 1558:

Je vien de la part du poète,
Lequel vous remontre par moy
Ce qui plus le tient en esmoy.
Le premier point . . ,
L'autre point . . ,

and lasted two or three hours. With beating hearts the crowd followed the events, accepted all that was offered, including the most unlikely issues, willingly allowed itself to be transported to the field of Troy or Agincourt, the bower of Venus, the garden of Hesperides, to hell, to heaven; the last of scribblers could perform such a miracle, the genius of a Shakespeare was not needed: for which cause contemporaries never suspected how prodigious that genius was, and posterity alone was to give it its true rank. The French poet, Saint-Amant, who visited London in 1631 and rided later a satire on "Albion," had been struck by the extraordinary interest awakened in the minds of spectators by the dramas represented before them. Such a passion was in his eyes nothing short of ridiculous; mothers and daughters, nobles and craftsmen, would have liked each play to last two hundred years:

Mère, fille, tante et nièce,
Bourgeois, nobles, artisans
Voudraient que de deux cents ans
Ne s'achevât une pièce.¹

The public gave vent to their feelings in noisy fashion.

He will cease speaking,

Car je voy cy, derrière moy,
Le sire Josse.

As on the English stage, the actors appeared from behind the arras at the rear; and in Grévin's comedy, Josse, coming forward, begins the play. See also Jean Godard's prologue to his "Desguisez," printed 1594:

Messieurs, je vien vers vous de la part du poète;

and Prologue explains what is going to be performed, "dessus cet eschaffaut."

¹ "Œuvres complètes," ed. Livet, vol. ii. "Albion, caprice héroï-comique."

"Each base clown," says disdainful Hall, "his clumsy fist doth bruise," so energetic his applause,

And shows his teeth in double rotten row.

Sometimes, however, the drama would displease ; the crowd then hissed, shouted, and especially mewed ; "Monsieur Mew" was the terror of players and poets,¹ who, some of them, in view of the danger, secured beforehand the services of a domesticated claque, or "Ingles."

"*Belch.* Why, whats an Ingle, man ?

"*Post-Haste.* One whose hands are hard as battle doors with clapping at baldness.

"*Clowt.* Then we shall have rare ingling at the 'Prodigall Child.'"²

Then, as now, authors complained of fate, and of the influence of mere luck on the success of plays :

Plays have a fate in their conception lent ;
Some so short liv'd, no sooner show'd than spent,
But born to-day, to-morrow buried, and
Though taught to speak, neither to go nor stand.³

The audience rarely kept silent long ; a deafening din by which some knightly feats are interrupted reminds Spenser of the cries and shouts in theatres :

All suddenly they heard a troublous noyes
That seemed some perilous tumult to desine,
Confusd with womens cries, and shouts of boyes,
Such as the troubled Theaters oftimes annoyes.⁴

¹ "What You Will," by Marston, printed 1607, Induction.

² "Histrio-mastix, or the Player whipt," printed 1610, written long before (above, p. 39) ; in Simpson, "School of Shakspeare," 1878, vol. ii. p. 33.

³ Th. Heywood, prologue for a revival of his "If you know not me," first printed 1605.

⁴ "Faerie Queene," book iv. canto iii.

Disturbances were occasioned by quarrels among the spectators, or wranglings between people in the pit and gallants on the stage. The former would insult the latter, throw apples at them, and spit on their clothes. Never mind, said Dekker to his gallants, "'tis most gentleman-like patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly animals."

The play went on, full of terrible events readily accepted and believed in, so awful that the hair of the hearers stood "quite upright" (Hall). When horror was at its height and the crowd was "dead struck," then the author relented :

. . . 'Midst the silent rout,
Comes leaping in a self-misformed lout,
And laughs and grins, and frames his mimic face,
And justles straight into the princes place ;
Then doth the theatre echo all aloud,
With gladsome noise of that applauding crowd.

Lost in the vast circle, critics and rival poets listened and prepared the debates which would enliven the tavern meeting later :

Meanwhile our poets in high parliament
Sit watching every word and gesturement . . .
Whispering their verdict in their fellow's ear.
Woe to the word whose margin in their scrole
Is noted with a black condemning coal !¹

Then, as now, however, the success of a play did not depend upon the connoisseurs, but upon the crowd. "Your carman and tinker," observed Dekker, "claim as strong a voice in their suffrage, and sit to give judgment on the play's life and death as well as the proudest *Momus* among the tribe of critic."² Ben Jonson allowed his hearers to

¹ Joseph Hall, "Satires," book i. sat. iii. 1597.

² "Guls Horn-Booke," 1609, ed. McKerrow, 1904, p. 49.

follow each his own opinion, provided he would not "censure by contagion or upon trust, from another's voice or face that sits by him."¹

To the play usually succeeded a dance, accompanied sometimes with enlivening songs which obtained warm applause: "The jigge is cal'd for when the play is done."² By that time it was the hour for supper, the tavern meal *par excellence*, and London taverns were famous. The Falcon, an inn and tavern near the theatres, the Mermaid, the Mitre, the Boar's Head in the city, were never empty. Haunting "the Globes and Mermaides" was all one.³ At the tavern, the gaiety was boisterous, the customers numerous, the spending considerable: "One comfort," says the gaoler in "Cymbeline" to Posthumus, who has been sentenced to death, "is you shall be called to no more payments, fear no more tavern bills." Foreigners admired the splendour of these places and noted with wonder the presence there of artisans who made "good cheer oftner than once a day on rabbits, hares, and all sorts of viands." As for the comfort, it passed belief, "for you would see in those taverns much hay (rushes) on the flooring and many tapestry pillows upon which travellers seat themselves."⁴ This statement is confirmed by the municipal authorities, as unfriendly to taverns as to

¹ Induction to "Bartholomew Fair."

² "Jacke Drums Entertainment," played ab. 1600. ". . . Quas [comœdias et tragoedias] variis etiam saltationibus, suavissima adhibita musica, magno cum populi applausu, finire solent," 1598.—Hentzner, "Itinerarium," Nuremberg, 1612, p. 131.

³

Haunting

The Globes and Mermaides, wedging in with Lords
Still at the table, and affecting lechery
In velvet.

Ben Jonson, "The Devil is an Ass," played 1616, iii. 1.

⁴ Perlin, "Description [du] Royaulme d'Angleterre," fol. 28 and 31. A less flattering image in W. Rowley, "A Search for Money," 1609, Percy Soc. 1840, p. 11, and in Earle, "Micro-cosmographie," 1628.

theatres : people drank till they were drunk, they ate till indigestion stopped them ; even the "meaner sort" indulged in venison, a food meant for gentlemen ; great enormities were perpetrated.¹ The whole public of the playhouse was represented in these gatherings : city merchants, swaggerers with sounding spurs, pirates proud of their recent feats and new wealth ; gallants telling of their successes with the ladies at court, women not from the court, who accomplished in a trice the conquest of these conquerors ; players, authors, apprentice-authors desirous of making themselves known. Pipes were lit, a "red-nose fidler" sang the ballad of the day,² a satiric, lubric, or warlike one, to a known tune, hummed by all present. Critics drew out their papers and discussed the points noted during the performance ; a poet read his verses.³ Questions of literary art were followed then with such keen interest that, for tavern-keepers, authors were almost indispensable customers. Their presence was an attraction and an advertisement. An author who talked well, and loud, who was interesting and drew visitors, need not be afraid that his bill would ever be handed to him,⁴ a privilege he had in common with the omnipresent traveller.

¹ The Mayor and aldermen to Burghley, Aug. 6, 1573 ; Ellis, "Original Letters," II. iii. 37. Cf. G. Whetstone, "A Mirour for Magestrates of Cyties," 1584, fol. 24, 32.

² ". . . Our new found songs and sonets, which every red nose fidler hath at his fingers end, and every ignorant ale knight will breath forth over the potte."—Nash, "Anatomie of Absurditie," 1590, sig. B. iiij.

³ "Your odes ? O that which you spoke . . . at the ordinary when Musco the gull cryed mew at it ?"—Dekker, "Satiromastix," played 1601 ; "Works," Pearson, i. 193.

⁴ "I would further entreat our poet to be in league with the mistress of the ordinary ; because from her, upon condition that he will but rime knights and young gentlemen to her house, and maintain the table in good fooling, he may easily make up his mouth at her cost gratis."—Dekker, "The Gulls Horn-Booke," ed. McKerrow, p. 44. A tavern "is the studie of sparkling wits, and a cup of canarie their booke." What is a "pretender to learning" ? "A great plagiarie of tavern-wit."—Earle, "Micro-cosmographie," 1628.

No love lost between the two kinds of discoursers ; your traveller "will usurp all the talk," an author would say, "ten constables are not so tedious."¹ Poor devils of rimesters, doubtful of success, came to the tavern to try and enlist admirers. They revealed in confidence their title and plot to the gallants who would sit gloriously on the stage, and these, flattered by the attention, promised their applause. Sometimes, too, poets were so truly famous, that there would be a general hush, and before a wondering public, quivering with pleasure and admiration, a wit duel would go on, under the smoky rafters, between a drinker called Jonson and another called Shakespeare :

. . What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid ! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.²

A perfect paradise these taverns were, and all creation could be met there complete, serpent included.

III.

Theatres have been built, and their number is without parallel in Europe ; immense crowds fill them each day ; companies of actors, trained from their youth to the profession, successfully perform, with scanty scenery, but

¹ "He that is with him is Amorphus a traveller. . . . The wife of the ordinary gives him his diet to maintain her table in discourse ; which is indeed a mere tyranny over her other guests, for he will usurp all the talk ; ten constables are not so tedious."—Ben Jonson, "Cynthia's Revels," played 1600, ii. 1.

² "Mr. Francis Beaumont's Letter to Ben Jonson," written at an uncertain date, when away from London.

in splendid costumes, the works of a multitude of poets. As it had been for translations from the learned languages, so it is now for tragedies and comedies : there are in the city, in Southwark, at Shoreditch, drama factories so to speak, where artisans of talent, and sometimes men of genius, all of incredible fecundity, ceaselessly invent, rime, and stuff with incidents plays which, however numerous, scarcely suffice to answer the demand. To facilitate their Danaïdes' task and to assuage the public's "soif que rien n' étanche," many have organised a division of labour. Under the chief engineer who manages the whole concern, there is the subordinate contributor who will supply tragical discourses, and the contributor who will provide puns and merry jokes. Even plot-making was a special branch of work ; a writer is described in a novel of the period as "the best common-play plotter in England."¹ This was his avocation ; he was applied to for a plot and for nothing else ; any one who paid him could make use of his ingenuity, as a painter uses the services of his perspective designer. The plot maker kept secret the ideas he worked out, for fear of pirates ; there were many about town :

"*Sancho*. I am a firebrand of Phœbus myself ; we'll invoke together, so you will not steal my plot.

"*Roderigo*. 'Tis not my fashion.

"*Sancho*. But now-a-days 'tis all the fashion."²

The mass of the work produced by these ever active factories was not at all meant for the court, the great, the clever, but for the multitude. Noblemen might come to the theatre if so disposed ; the Queen could order some company playing a successful play to perform before her, but neither for her, nor for her courtiers, did dramatic artisans labour, and poets lend their ear to the Muse.

¹ Middleton, dedication of "Father Hubburds Tales."

² "Spanish Gipsy," by the same, iii. 1.

The master on whom depended the fate of plays, the actors' bread, the poets' salary, was the common crowd, the English people.

To this people, food must be supplied conformable to its tastes. Its tastes were not the outcome of its education, but of its origin and nature; they were genuine and spontaneous, not artificial. Spectators obliged playwrights to adopt them; for like the people of all nations they wanted to see on the stage, in more brilliant or repulsive colours, that is to say in more accentuated hues, what they dimly observed within or around themselves, what they felt but could not express, what they might do but could not tell. Having been settled for five hundred years apart in their island, the only people in Europe who, in this lapse of time, had known no foreign invasion, while having on the contrary invaded lands beyond the sea and kept alive their love of adventures, they had coalesced gradually, and their genius had assumed its enduring characteristics. The three layers of races that had, in olden time, been superposed in England, had become fused into one whole during the fourteenth century; their union was now intimate. By process of analysis however, as nothing can be lost nor can entirely vanish, it would be possible to trace out again the main lines of the temper of each: the readiness of speech of the Celts (*"argute loqui"*), the lyricism and gravity of the Anglo-Saxons, the enquiring, ingenious and practical mind of the Franco-Normans, their gift for observation and raillery.¹ Saxon seriousness and Norman irony combined make English humour. Only few traces appeared of what is so characteristic of nations strongly permeated by Latin ideas: the sense of measure, the self-restraint, the art of selection, the love of straight lines, the disdain for details, the desire to concentrate attention on one single

¹ Above, vol. I. pp. 7-9.

central point; such sedate tastes finally that, among England's nearest neighbours, the French, none of the means proper to comedy were allowed in tragedy, and critics frowned when Racine was bold enough to represent Nero listening from behind the arras, an attitude they considered unworthy of such a play as "*Britannicus*."

What could please such crowds as filled English theatres, is easy to imagine; ballads, complaints, novels and popular prints show it as clearly as extant dramas. If the innumerable plays mentioned by Henslowe and the even more numerous ones of which no trace survives, should be by chance discovered, they would all fit the frame; not one would be found which, written according to classical rules, would have proved successful and brought in money; but all of them would demonstrate the fondness of spectators for:

—Tragical and bloody sights.—Very tragical ones were constantly met with in ordinary life; darker ones were indispensable on the stage under penalty of seeming commonplace. There was nobody among the audience who had not, time and again, seen people beheaded, burnt or hanged. One could not pass London Bridge without counting some twenty or thirty heads rotting there. Culprits going through the streets, stripped to the waist and wet with blood under the lash, were such a common sight that little attention was paid to it. The pit itself, where the mass of spectators huddled together, still retained at times the sickening scent of the blood of bears and dogs spilt the day before in the yard transformed into a circus.

—Sentimental speeches, pretty touching discourses; also magnificent poetical and lyrical outbursts.—Crowds in all countries and times are prone, in moments of excitement, to be both sentimental and cruel. When, during the September massacres in Paris, one of the intended

victims was set free, the slaughterers would accompany him to his home and mingle their tears with those of his family. Pure poetry, on the other hand, sent the London public into raptures and ecstasies ; whether the lyrical outbursts were opportunely timed or not, they always pleased, and they pleased more and were more heartily enjoyed in London than anywhere else at that period.

— Noise : be it pleasurable or tragical—sweet music, slow music, solemn music, songs, trumpets, bells (*flourish, alarum, sennet*), cannon, thunder, crackers, fireworks.¹ Jupiter casts his thunderbolt, kings of the thirteenth century fire their guns ; a “rolled bullet” imitates thunder ; a “tempestuous drum rumbles” to make the audience believe there is a storm.²

— Surprising occurrences, incredible adventures and fantastical apparitions—lost children recognised twenty years later “by a broken ring or a handkircher,” said Gosson, men disguised as women, women disguised as pages, princes as shepherds, shepherds becoming emperors, wondrous doings of sprites, sorcerers and ghosts, distant scenes discovered in magical mirrors, as in the “Faerie Queene,” as in fairy tales. But all this must be made perfectly clear, by explanations several times repeated ; failing these, the spectators will not understand ; uneasy, they will be displeased with themselves and much more so with the author. Comedies of errors abound ; several of Shakespeare’s plays belong to this class.

— Wit in all its varieties, the simplest being the most effective.—This other sort of “surprising occurrences” never failed to cause delight, at least when the understanding of

¹ A custom long continued : “*Gossip Tattle*. Ay me ! . . .—*Prologue*. Nay, start not, Ladies, these carry no fire-works to frighten you, but a torch i’ their hands to give light to the business.”—Ben Jonson, “Staple of News,” Induction ; performed 1625.

² Ben Jonson, “Every Man in his Humour,” Prologue.

it was easy; to be very clear was much more important than to be very clever. Conceits, plays upon words, puns, were greatly enjoyed, well-known puns especially, because they were understood at once, and the assembly was pleased with its own perspicuity. The same ones were repeated several times in the same play; they had much more success the second time than the first. The greatest geniuses could scarcely afford to neglect such means of conciliating their hearers; Shakespeare never writes the words "to lie" without playing upon the double meaning. It was also to flatter the audience and persuade them that they could understand all subtleties, allusions or allegories, that authors long preserved the strange custom of exhibiting "dumb shows," symbolical pantomimes preceding either the play or each of the several acts and foreshadowing the subject of the performance. Prudently, however, the purport of the show was made clearer by explanations supplied by the Prologue or the chorus; the compliment paid to the public was thus somewhat diminished; but incomprehension was above all to be avoided.¹

— Patriotic allusions, glorious memories, subjects drawn from English history.—We have seen what was, at that moment, the general disposition, what pride national triumphs had aroused. If audiences liked, on all subjects, an exaggeration of realities, no matter what the subject was, in these particular ones an author could not go too far: everything was taken on trust; success was in proportion to the exaggeration. The poets who distributed "that light commodity: words," would have been ill-

¹ Without speaking of the famous "dumb shows" in the Players' tragedy at Elsinore ("Hamlet," iii. 2), a number of dramas were supplied with this ornament; e.g. "Gorboduc," "Locrine," "The Misfortunes of Arthur," "The Battell of Alcazar," "The Spanish Tragedie," etc. Even a common-life tragedy, like "A Warning for Faire Women," had its dumb shows.

advised to show parsimony. The enemy are all cowards, traitors, blockheads ; their abjectness is such that one wonders what merit there could be in crushing them ; but to ask this was beyond the reasoning powers of the audiences ; they looked only at the actual fact as exhibited to them, and considered the national triumph immeasurably increased if, instead of possible numbers, they heard that the French losses at Agincourt were eleven thousand men, and the English ones "twenty-five, or twenty-six." This alternative of a possible twenty-sixth pleased by its minuteness and as a sign of careful accuracy. Kyd represents, in his "Spanish Tragedy," the court of Spain beholding three pantomimic plays, all of them to the glory of England, and one to the shame of Spain. No one dreamt of protesting on the ground of unlikelihood, nor of complaining of what gave pleasure. After the defeat of the Armada, the taste for dramas on national subjects, which was not, up to then, more developed in England than elsewhere, became paramount ; nearly eighty are known to have been represented between 1590 and 1600 ;¹ one-third of Shakespeare's plays deal with the history of his country, and the majority of them belong to this period.

— Contemporaneity.—To be in sympathy with the hero, whoever he might be, the spectators wanted to feel him near to them by his sentiments, his ways of thinking, his manners and, at all events, his costume. The authors of mysteries, nearer to the time of the Conquest, had given Herod and Tiberius that sign of aristocratic rank, French speech ; romance writers, miniature painters had represented Achilles borne to his grave by tonsured monks.² The system is continued ; anachronisms are like hyphens,

¹ F. E. Schelling, "The English Chronicle Play," New York, 1902, p. 53.

² Above, vol. I. p. 129.

like bridges connecting past and present; without this indispensable means of communication, the interest lags; we do not know these people, their business is *res inter alios acta*. The poet transports us to the court of Dionysius the tyrant; we feel bewildered in this strange place. But we meet there Grim the collier of Croydon: we take heart again, we are no longer isolated, lost in a remote Syracuse, we have acquaintances there.¹ A Roman was found much more interesting with a pistol in his pocket than with a sword at his side; this pistol brought him nearer to the spectators. Shakespeare's Romans, in "Coriolanus," say "grace 'fore meat," break lances, play top, are put in the stocks, die on the wheel and are buried "i' the holy churchyard." Those who learnedly endeavour to have Shakespeare's plays represented with authentic Roman costumes are as anachronistic as the poet himself.

If modernised Romans pleased the public, real modern men, contemporary deeds and events interested it even more. Authors lost no time therefore in appropriating such sources of success and profit as the event or the personage who happened to be the talk of the day. Marlowe showed Henri III. of France on the stage less than four years after his death; Chapman introduced into his tragedies Henri IV., who was still alive. Another ridiculed Philip II., who, as we have seen, on the receipt of the news, hurried the preparations for his Armada; others derided James VI. and the Scotch. A storm and a wreck on the coasts of the Bermudas, where the navigators declared they had been troubled by spirits, was much talked of in 1610; Shakespeare thereupon wrote his "Tem-

¹ "The excellent Comedie of . . . Damon and Pithias," London, 1571, licensed, 1566, by Richard Edwards, Master of the children of the Chapel, of whom Googe (and no one else) says that if Terence and Plautus could see his "doyngs," they would "burne with teares, that which with myrth began," that is, their books.—"Eglogs . . . and Sonettes," 1563; Arber's ed. p. 80.

pest." In accordance with this taste were also composed many dramas, several of which were suppressed and their authors imprisoned, containing the satire of conspicuous personages then living. Vicious men were there castigated, innocent ones too when they had displeased, and very ill-satisfied they were to be thrown in the same lot as undisputed scoundrels: a practice of doubtful honesty, but very handy and an old-established one, as we may see. "Let them be well used . . ." says Hamlet of comedians; "after your death, you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you lived."¹ The contemporaries of Elizabeth having no daily papers did what they could to supply the want. The custom was continued and even aggravated under James.

— Comical scenes, either isolated or mixed with tragical ones; representations of real life; minute details, low allusions, immoralities, these last, resorted to more to produce laughter than to lead any one into temptation.— Not only were secondary characters, servants, porters, etc., not excluded from the loftiest dramas, but some were

¹ Numerous allusions in the literature of the period show how great this abuse became, matters of state being occasionally mixed with personal allusions and slander, in spite of all the regulations on the licensing of plays. "These players," says the Tribune in Jonson's "Poetaster," ". . . will rob us that are magistrates of our respect, bring us upon their stages, and make us ridiculous to the plebeians; they will play you or me." See the Privy Council's characteristic letter of August 15, 1597: "Upon information given us of a lewd plaie that was plaied in one of the plaie howses on the Bancke Side, contanyng very seditious and sclanderous matter, wee caused some of the players to be apprehended and comytted to pryson, whereof one of them was not only an actor but a maker of parte of the said plaie." The rest of the actors shall be apprehended, and it must be ascertained "what copies they have given forth of the said playe and to whome."—"Acts of the Privy Council," new series, vol. xxvii. The play was probably the "Isle of Dogs," by Thomas Nash and others, written for Henslowe and played that year, no copy of which survived (below, p. 122). "The Game of Chess," by Middleton, given with considerable success in 1624, was forbidden at the request of the Spanish Ambassador, Gondomar, who was represented in the play. Bacon protests against such practices.

imagined more abject than nature and were placed side by side with the hero; their coarse jests increased by contrast the gloom of massacres and the splendour of triumphs. Common life details were never omitted; they offered one more means of bringing things home to the spectator. No court festivity, no princely banquet was represented on the stage without being prefaced by the inevitable scene between the servants. The hearers, good judges of such scenes, seeing that truth was observed in them, trusted the author for the exactness of the rest. This again was a kind of bridge and an indispensable means of communication between two worlds. Scenes in houses of ill fame were frequent,¹ they always amused; such houses and the playhouses entertained neighbourly relations, and exchanged customers, which justly aroused the indignation of the Puritans. The mixture of the serious and the funny was intimate; continuous attention presupposes education; a crowd is by nature inattentive; variety must be offered to it, some excitant to keep its mind awake. The fool, the jester, the clown, the peasant, the simpleton, the ninny, ever resorted to, even in mysteries, were an infallible element of success. In the satire of contemporary literature which enlivens the "Pilgrimage to Parnassus," a clown is shown "drawn in with a rope":

"*Clowne*. What now? thrust a man into the commonwealth whether hee will or noe? what the devill should I doe here?

"*Dromo*. Why, what an ass art thou! dost thou not

¹ In "The Poore-mans Comfort," by Daborne; in "Measure for Measure," "Pericles," etc. Doll Tear-Sheet calls herself "a poor whore in a bawdy-house," "2 Henry IV.," ii. 4. Cf. the Induction to the "Ile of Guls" of Day, and see the "Poetaster" of Jonson who, being then on bad terms with Shakespeare's troupe, alleges that plays of this sort—"a good bawdy play"—are given especially "on the other side of Tyber," that is south of the Thames, at Southwark (iii. 1).

knowe a playe cannot be without a clowne? Clownes have been thrust into playes by head and shoulders ever since Kempe could make a scurvey face; and therefore reason thou shouldst be drawne in with a cart-rope.

"*Clowne.* But what must I doe nowe?

"*Dromo.* Why, if thou canst but drawe thy mouth awrye, laye thy legge over thy staffe, sawe a piece of cheese asunder with thy dagger, lape up drinke on the earth, I warrant thee theile laughe mightilie. Well, I'le turne thee loose to them; ether saie somewhat for thy selfe, or hang and be *non plus*. [*Exit.*

"*Clowne.* This is fine y-faith! nowe, when they have noe-bodie to leave on the stage, they bringe mee up, and what is worse, tell mee not what I should saye."

Scarcely a tragedy without a clown. His talk was a delight and a rest for the mind; his part, very often, was not written beforehand; as stated by the author of the "Pilgrimage," he had to improvise. The audience was thus presented with a sort of by-play not necessarily connected with the main action, and "not onlie superfluous but beastlie and wicked."¹ We must not conclude from the fact that a printed play may have come down to us without a clown, that it had none. Sometimes the part being unwritten, remained of necessity unprinted; in other cases the printer suppressed it as fitter to amuse spectators than readers. Marlowe's "Tamburlaine" was strewn with drolleries, which the printer took upon himself to discard: "fond and frivolous jestures . . . which I thought might seeme . . . tedious unto the wise . . . though (happly) they have bene of some vaine conceited fondlings greatly

¹ "Yet are we so caried awaie with his unseemelie gesture and unreverend scorning, that we seeme onelie to be delighted in him; and are not content to sport our selves with modest mirth, as the matter gives occasion, unless it be intermixed with knaverie, dronken merie-ments, craftie coosenings, indecent juglings. . ."—"A second and third Blast of retrait from Plaies," 1580, in Hazlitt, "English Drama and Stage," p. 138.

gaped at what time they were shewed upon the stage in their graced deformities" (1590).

— Generally speaking, exuberance, spontaneity, fancy.— Reserve and self-possession were out of the question, being either disdained or unknown; they were undesirable, they might injure an author's chances and freeze an audience. Jonson, who happened to possess qualities of this kind, suffered from them throughout his career; too much thought was needed to appreciate him; he had not therefore those overwhelming successes that a number of his inferiors enjoyed. An unexpected sally in the midst of a lugubrious scene, a flower of poetry of peerless grace in the hands of an executioner, won general applause. If a joke occurred to the greatest dramatist of the period while writing the main scene of his tragedy and picturing the death of his hero, he would put in his joke without hesitation.

Nothing like necessity for instructing men. The cravings of the public were so obvious, and the necessity of yielding to them was so ineluctable that the thickest-brained were bound to understand, and the most obstinate to make concessions. Jonson, who resisted, proud of his learning, knew these wants better than any one, and had to yield more than once. All these means of success were engraved in the minds of dramatists, from the least of rimesters to the greatest geniuses; they were accessible to all and any one might come and provision himself as at a public store. The same means did duty in a quantity of plays by a quantity of authors, and sometimes in various plays of the same author; the audience did not tire of them any more than of puns several times repeated. Oberon king of the fairies appears with his train in three or four dramas of the same period. A magical head renders oracles in two plays by Greene and one by Peele. The apparent death of a personage who is found alive

again further on in the play is five times shown on the stage by Shakespeare alone.

Nothing rarer at this period than a successful drama which had not immediately its replica. Scarcely had Marlowe won applause with the surprising conquests of his Tamburlaine than another Tamburlaine, Greene's Alphonsus of Aragon, paced the stage. To the Faust of the same Marlowe corresponded the Friar Bacon of the same Greene. In the middle of a drama by Kyd the hero causes a play to be performed, the allusions in which will lead to the discovery of certain murderers. The idea having proved successful, all heroes, in the same predicament, resorted to the same invention. Hamlet used it; Massinger broke all records, employing it three times in a single play.¹ Scarcely had a ghost crying vengeance thrilled an audience, when ghosts multiplied, numberless, on the boards. This means of causing terror, adapted from the Romans, was so constantly used that it soon became threadbare; it was derided, and with what scorn! In one play you will see:

How some damn'd tyrant, to obtain a crown,
Stabs, hangs, poisons, smothers, cutteth throats. . . .
Then, too, a filthy whining ghost,
Lapt in some foul sheet, or a leather pilch,
Comes like a pig half stick'd,
And cries, *Vindicta*—Revenge, Revenge!²

The process was nevertheless appropriated by Shakespeare, but it seemed then as though it were used for the first time, and no one laughed when he summoned forth the royal Dane on the terrace at Elsinore.

The importance of these recipes was obvious. Publishers were aware of it, as well as players and authors. When a

¹ His "Roman Actor"; below, p. 424.

² Induction to "A Warning for Faire Women," printed 1599; reprinted by Simpson, "School of Shakspeare," 1878, vol. ii. p. 242.

printer got hold of a manuscript play and issued it, he usually inscribed conspicuously on the title-page the merits which had won for the work its success on the stage and would probably secure readers for it: they are infallibly drawn from the above repertory. One will find in the book a "most tragicall and lamentable murther";¹ the second part of another will contain "greater murthers" than the first;² the adventures of Mucedorus, son of the King of Valentia, will be enlivened by "the merie conceites of Mouse," the clown;³ the "Life of Cambises" is "a lamentable tragedy mixed ful of pleasant mirth";⁴ the events in the reign of Richard III. include "the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephewes"; the history of Henry IV. is seasoned "with the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstafle"; elsewhere we shall see "the extreame crueltie" of a Jew towards a merchant "in cutting a just pound of his flesh."⁵ If the subject is drawn from the author's fancy, the printer will assert, nevertheless, that it is founded on fact; here is a "Scottish historie of James the fourth," and while it is "entermixed with a pleasant comedie presented by Oboram (Oberon), King of Fayeries," yet the hero is the very "James the fourth slaine at Flodden"; in fact he is nothing of the kind; king of Scotland and king of fairies are equally unreal, and the James of the play is the husband of a Queen Dorothea who never existed.⁶ If the events were remote

¹ Title of "A Warning for Faire Women."

² Note advertising an intended continuation of "Selimus," 1594.

³ "Mucedorus," 1598, ed. Warnke and Proescholdt, Halle, 1878, and in Brooke, "Shakespeare Apocrypha," Oxford, 1908. The clown's part seems to have been the only cause of the success of this play, with which some have unreverently connected the name of Shakespeare; 15th ed. 1668.

⁴ By Preston, 1570, 4to ("Théâtre en Angleterre," p. 270). Horrible crimes are enlivened by the merriment of the three ruffians Huf, Ruf, and Snuf.

⁵ First editions of the plays of Shakespeare on these subjects.

⁶ By Greene, first ed. 1598, licensed May, 1594.

in date or place, instead of finding in this an advantage as French classics did, English dramatists inclined on the contrary to offer excuses and point out extenuating circumstances; the public had to be reasoned into acceptance: "Had not yee rather, for novelties sake, see Jerusalem yee never saw, then London that yee see hourelly?"¹ For scriptural subjects, it is true such excuses were scarcely needed; biblical events were present to everybody's mind, and could do duty as well as contemporary ones. But if it was a question of Turks, if Emperor Selim was to appear before the public, the printer tried to secure the reader's interest by recalling that this Selim was "grandfather to him that now raigneth."² When Racine treated of Bajazet, he also pleaded extenuating circumstances, but for opposite reasons: the events were almost contemporary, it is true, and this might be a matter for regret; but happily the remoteness of the country supplied, in a way, the distant perspective indispensable for the French stage.

Authors were the more prone to provision themselves at these stores that their dinner often depended on the success of the performance, and that success was in direct ratio, not to their genius, but to the use they had made of the accepted recipes. Henslowe's accounts leave no doubt as to this; the awful tragedy of "Titus Andronicus," the blackest, most incoherent and bloody that had yet been represented, this impossible nightmare transferred to the stage, where the measure, one would think, had been passed, yields at times the best receipt of the week. A performance of "Titus" in 1594 brings in twelve

¹ "The four Prentises of London with the Conquest of Jerusalem," by Th. Heywood, Prologue; pr. 1615. "Dramatic Works," London, Pearson, 1874.

² "The first part of the tragicall raigne of Selimus . . ." 1594, 4to; same precaution in Peele's "Battell of Alcazar," below, p. 126. On Greene's possible authorship of "Selimus" see Greg, *Modern Language Review*, i. 242.

shillings, whilst Marlowe's "Jew of Malta" only ten, and "Hamlet," the old anonymous play, eight.

We understand therefore how, given this public, authors so willingly made use not only of stale means of pleasing, but of stale plays too. The man of genius who remodelled an old drama and transformed it into an immortal masterpiece did not choose it because it was an obscure and unsuccessful one, but, on the contrary, because it had pleased the audience and could be made more pleasing still. "Hamlet," "King Lear," "Henry V.," "Richard III.," "Taming of the Shrew," and many others had been received with applause on the stage when Shakespeare, touching them with his magic wand, transformed into wonders for all time what had sufficed for a run of some weeks. "How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, he should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times), who in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!"¹ The success of the play thus commemorated must have been considerable; yet it was not Shakespeare's, but the rough sketch which he retouched and which had had a most prosperous career owing to the means of pleasing it contained: famous battles, appeals to patriotism, drolleries of a clown and of ridiculous poltroons.

Hence, and owing to such unavoidable necessities, can be explained how the greatest poets might deride the unbridled style dear to the crowd, and yet adopt it themselves. Jonson protested against the blood-smeared "Spanish Tragedy" of Kyd, and none the less accepted Henslowe's pay to retouch it and secure for it a new run. Shakespeare made fun of the same drama, and

¹ "Pierce Penilesse," 1592; Shakespeare Society, p. 60.

introduced its most conspicuous incidents into his own "Hamlet."

We must notice also how, with such dispositions in both public and authors, the French and English dramatic arts were bound more and more to diverge. Writers in the two countries had, at the close of the Middle Ages, started from the same point, but they were now following roads branching off; the more they went the further apart they got; they would soon be unable to hear and see each other. When, after many years and a long journey, they were to find themselves again face to face, it would be first to quarrel (in the days of the great war of the romantics and classics), then to embrace, without being able, however, to remove entirely all differences and misunderstandings. At the period we have reached, in the days of Elizabeth, the opposition between the two systems was growing; the aim of the one is to simplify, of the other to complicate; the one excludes all that is not indispensable; the other considers as indispensable a variety of trifles, flowers of speech, bye scenes, subordinate personages, not to mention wonders, surprises, and all the inventions of marvelously prolific imaginations. In some English plays, wrote the French dramatist Destouches later, à propos of the "Tempest," there is "perpetual magic. And what incidents cannot be brought about by the force of magic? How happy we should be in France, we comic authors, if we could be permitted to use so convenient an art! . . . But as soon as we want to take our imagination as our guide we are hissed unmercifully."¹

In order to complete, so far as our narrow frame allows, this short view of the English stage before Shakespeare, we might almost say that it would be enough now to give lists of authors and titles of plays, so exactly do all these predecessors fit into the above categories.

¹ "Scènes Anglaises," Dedication.

Barring a single exception, none were endowed with genius; none tried to build a play upon solid foundations; all disdained to trouble about verisimilitude; they rather avoided it purposely, as an impediment to success. All were prolific, and were possessed of Post-Haste's ready pen; to most of them the Muse, so favourable then to England, whispered haphazard some divine verses, which they buried under the cumbersome load of their murders, farces, adventures, and sortileges.

This was the time when a quantity of professional men of letters, several already known to us, wrote for the stage: Kyd, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Nash,¹ and the greatest of them all, Marlowe: Henslowe's purveyors, all of them. With these, a quantity of anonymous authors, whose plays we have and whose names we ignore, and others whose names we know but whose plays we possess not.² From the pens of the ones or the others proceeded romantic dramas, drawn from amorous Italian novels or poems, like the "Promos and Cassandra" of Whetstone, taken from Giraldi Cinthio,³ or Greene's "Historie of Orlando Furioso,"⁴ and "James IV.," drawn, the first from

¹ He composed, in conjunction with others, several plays; *e.g.* the before-mentioned "Isle of Dogs" (above, p. 113), on account of which his lodgings were searched and he was sent to prison: "Wee pray you also to peruse soche papers as were founde in Nashe his lodgings, which Ferrys a messenger of the chamber shall deliver unto you, and to certifie us th' examynacion you take."—"Acts of the Privy Council," letter of August 15, 1597; new series, vol. xxvii. We possess only one play, of small value, by Nash alone, "Summer's last Will"; "Works," ed. McKerrow, vol. iii.

² Best list: W. W. Greg, "A List of English Plays written before 1643 and printed before 1700," London, Bibliographical Society, 1900, and "List of Masques," 1902.

³ "The right excellent and famous Historie of Promos and Cassandra, divided into two comical Discourses," 1578, 4to, by Whetstone, translator of Giraldi Cinthio, and whose play was the original followed by Shakespeare in "Measure for Measure."

⁴ "The historie of Orlando Furioso, one of the twelve Pieres of France," by Robert Greene, 1594, 4to, acted 1592. "Plays and Poems," ed. J. C. Collins, Oxford, 1905, vol. i. p. 215; separate ed. by Greg and McKerrow, Malone

Ariosto, the second from Giraldis; many plays from the Scriptures, some revealed to us by their names appearing in Henslowe's Diary, or by certain properties (like Eve's bodice) figuring in the list of his players' possessions; others still in existence, such as the "King David and fair Bethsabe" of Peele, a biblical love-drama, in which, with a freedom almost equalling Pulci's, Jehovah is called Jove,¹ and where one of the attractions is, as the title records, the tragical end of Absalom.² A primitive mechanism of ropes and pulleys, concealed by an appropriate wig, costing Henslowe eighteenpence, served for the representation on the stage of that tragical end. The Bible also is the source of the "Looking Glasse for London and England," by Greene and Lodge; miracles and merri-ments keep the attention of hearers alert; ruffians and a clown get drunk in the streets of Nineveh, "for the ale is good ale, and you can aske but a peny for a pot, no more by the statute." In more or less solemn fashion, prophets come forth: "Enters brought in by an Angell Oseas the prophet, and set downe over the stage in a throne," the heavenly throne so conspicuous in theatrical properties; then appears "Jonas the prophet cast out of the whales

Society, 1907. The part of Orlando, as played probably by Alleyn, and offering great differences with the printed texts, is preserved in MS. at Dulwich, best ed. in Greg's "Henslowe Papers," p. 155. On Greene's novels, see above, II. 524.

¹ Above, vol. II. p. 15. It has been objected that Pulci merely follows the example of Dante. But it is not quite so, and the difference between the times is well marked. Dante, in "Inferno," xxxi. 92, and "Purgatorio," vi. 118, speaks of the "Sommo Giove" with the meaning of "la divinità in generale" (Scartazzini), which is certainly not the same thing as to invoke, as Pulci does, the "Sommo Giove per noi crocifisso."

² "The love of King David and fair Bethsabe, with the tragedie of Absalon," 1599, 4to. "Works," ed. Bullen, vol. ii.; "A mess of cloying sugar-plums," says the learned editor, i. xli. The play, as stated in the prologue, has for its subject David,

Whose Muse was dipt in that inspiring dew
Archangels stilled from the breath of Jove.

belly upon the stage." Prophets, being professionally endowed with foresight, address to the "Western cities," and especially to London ("Looke, London, looke . . ."), wise admonitions, so that this Ninevite play may serve as a "Looking glasse for London."¹

In greater abundance still, the authors of this period produced boisterous dramas, full of blood and noise, like those of Thomas Kyd,² one of the playwrights who best knew how to evolve from the Senecan model, truculent compositions nearer to "Tamburlaine" than to "Gorboduc," and fit to shake the nerves of the most stolid groundling. Foremost among his dramas is the famous "Spanish Tragedy," so copiously applauded, derided, and imitated.³ This gruesome tale, opened by a ghost, "and with him Revenge," in which an old man of disabled will, Hieronimo, has to avenge the death of his son, hesitates to do the terrible deed, assumes the appearance of madness and brings the story to its conclusion and the

¹ "A Looking Glasse for London and England, made by Thomas Lodge, Gentleman, and Robert Greene, in Artibus Magister," London, 1594, 4to; repr. in "Plays and Poems of Robert Greene," ed. Collins, i. 137.

² Born in London in 1558, Kyd studied at the Merchant Taylors' School when Mulcaster (above, II. 353) was headmaster and Spenser one of the pupils; he read much, but knew nothing well, neither Latin, Italian, nor French; his prose translation of Tasso's "Padre di Famiglia" ("The Housholders Philosophie," 1588) and his poetical version of Garnier's "Cornélie" ("Cornelia," 1594) contain not a few mistakes. Implicated in the proceedings against Marlowe for atheism, he was imprisoned, lost a nobleman's patronage which he had enjoyed for three years, and, as proved by Schick, died in poverty in 1594. "Works," ed. F. S. Boas, Oxford, 1901, 8vo; C. Crawford, "A Concordance to the Works of Kyd," Louvain, 1906, ff. (in Bang's "Materialen").

³ "The Spanish Tragedie, containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio and Bel-Imperia, with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo," written ab. 1585-7; revised for Henslowe by Ben Jonson, the play was again put on the stage in 1602. The 1st ed., 1592 (?), is lost; separate modern ed. by J. Schick, "Kyd's Spanish Tragedy," Berlin, 1901, 8vo. A so-called "First part of Ieronimo or the Warres of Portugal," perhaps a remodelling of an earlier text, was printed in 1605, the work of an anonymous author who probably took advantage of the renewed success of the "Tragedie" in 1602 (Boas, "Works of Kyd," p. xlii.).

murderers to punishment by the stratagem of a play performed at court before the guilty ones—a complete sketch of “Hamlet”—was the greatest theatrical success of the century. Sombre and tragical amours, a man hanged on the stage, stern revenge, high-sounding words and lugubrious sentences (“Seneca let bloud line by line, and page by page,” ironically said Nash¹), a grand display of murders at the end, delighted the public to whom Henslowe’s players were constantly offering the “Tragedy.” “Solyman and Perseda,” by the same Kyd, adorned with a chorus of abstract beings, Love, Fortune, and Death, who descant on the events after each act, is another sort of bloody drama wherein, scene after scene, “Death triumphs,” as the title records.² First Amurath kills Haleb, then Soliman kills Amurath, Erastus is strangled, Soliman “kills the two janissaries that kild Erastus,” two false witnesses are “tumbled downe” on the stage from the top of a tower, the lord marshal is killed, Perseda kills Lucina, Soliman kills Perseda, then kills Basilisco, then kills Piston, those two being the comic personages in the play, but the play was then nearly finished and they could be dispensed with; at the last act, no one being wanted any more, Soliman himself dies by poison; “they carry him forth with silence”—“Moonshine and lion are left to bury the dead,” Duke Theseus will say. By Kyd also, perhaps, the first “Hamlet,” lost, but the existence of which is certain, and from which sprang, under a master’s hand, the second, the eternal, the only “Hamlet.”

Of the same period, and belonging to the same group of

¹ Alluding to all who did the same, but more especially, as it seems, to Kyd. See Nash’s address “To the Gentlemen Students,” prefixed to Greene’s “Menaphon,” 1589, and the discussion in Boas, “Works of Kyd,” p. xx.

² “The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda. Wherein is laide open . . . Deaths Triumphs,” n.d., 1st dated ed. 1599. The subject is the same as in the play which Hieronimo causes to be represented at court in “The Spanish Tragedie.” On Kyd’s authorship, see “Works,” ed. Boas, p. lvi.

romantic tragedies, full of extraordinary events, of blood and noise, Greene's "Alphonsus King of Aragon," being any Alphonsus, the ruler of any Aragon; Venus performs the part of Prologue, the din of battle is constantly heard; "Amurack the great Turke" has a vision, and we see, in his company, "Medea do ceremonies belonging to conjuring," and Calchas "rise up in a white surplice and a Cardynals myter," a queer dress for Calchas and a queer dream for a Turk. Mahomet's head renders oracles and Amurack, in the end, gives his daughter to Alphonsus, to whom he wishes "King Nestors yeeres," and who will ultimately possess "the Turkish Emperie."

Strange to say, the public seems to have found this story a trifle extravagant, and the play had no great success.¹ But Peele's "Battell of Alcazar" fitted the tastes of the day perfectly and was often performed by Henslowe's players. Its hero, much more interesting than Alphonsus, was the famous English adventurer, Thomas Stukeley, a natural son, it was said, of Henry VIII., periodically in the prisons or pay of Elizabeth, the subject of plays, ballads, and tales, who had fought at Saint-Quentin and Lepanto and died at Alcazar, in Morocco, being then in the service of the 'King of Portugal.² All the princes of the period employed him, including the Pope; no life fuller, no agitation vainer, but the love of adventure was then at

¹ On which and on the probable date of the play (1587) see W. W. Greg, *Modern Language Review*, i. p. 242. The play was first printed in 1599: "The comicall Historie of Alphonsus King of Aragon, as it hath bene sundrie times acted."

² "The Battell of Alcazar . . . with the death of Captaine Stukeley," 1594, 4to; it is first mentioned in Henslowe's Diary (not as a new play) on February 29, 159[2]: "Rd. at mulamulluco . . . xxxiijs.," so called from the name of the Moorish prince, "Henslowe's Diary," Greg, p. 13; reprinted by the Malone Soc. 1907; "Works of George Peele," ed. Bullen, 1888, 2 vols. 8vo, cf. above, p. 20. Another play on the same hero: "The Life and Death of Captain Thomas Stukeley, with his marriage to Alderman Curteis daughter," 1605, anonymous, reprinted by Simpson, "School of Shakspeare," 1878, vol. i.

its height, and Stukeley, who died a rebel and a traitor to his country, remained popular there in proportion to his activity, not to his loyalism or success. Hideous sights abound in the play, duly foreshadowed in the "Presenter's" explanations and in the usual dumb-shows: thus would be secured the goodwill of the audience. The "tyrant king," subject of our play—

Black in his look, and bloody in his deeds,
And in his shirt, stain'd with a cloud of gore,
Presents himself, with naked sword in hand,
Accompanied as now you may behold
With devils coated in the shapes of men.

Thereupon follows the "First Dumb-show," then the second, and the Presenter resumes his lengthy explanations, so that the public may feel interested in those Abdelmelecs and Amuraths, distant people, it is true, but very ferocious, and living, besides, in our own days—

A modern matter full of blood and ruth.

The sights offered are not less gruesome than had been promised; Muly Mahamet feeds his wife with raw lion's flesh offered to her at the point of his sword; Moorish ambassadors, well read in Scævola's life, burn their own hands on a "blazing brand of fire," etc.

Much less bloody, Lodge's "Wounds of Civill War lively set forth in the true Tragedies of Marius and Scilla" offered, as a compensation, plenty of pageantry and much unexpected merriment. The play is drawn from Roman history, but history lowered to the level of the common public of the theatres. The tragical adventures in Plutarch are enlivened by the jests of a drunken clown and by the slang of Pedro, "a Frenchman," who, entrusted with the

care of murdering Marius, runs away swearing he has seen the devil.¹

A good many plays dealt with this frequent subject of popular ballads and pamphlets,² a recent and sensational murder. Of this class are such domestic tragedies as "Arden of Feversham," "A Warning for Faire Women," later the "Yorkshire Tragedy." More than a dozen are known to us by name, including "Murderus Mychaell," performed at court in 1578: for the common people were not alone interested in those common life dramas. In the surviving examples, touches of true poetry relieve the vulgarity of the subject; inappropriate and out of place sometimes, but none the less real poetry. Unable to restrain his own fancy, the author yielded to it, as was usual then, in time and out of time, and, not being more particular than he, the audience was thankful for the fine things it heard:

Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,
And sheting darknesse overhangs the earth,
And with the black-fold of her clowdie robe,
Obscures us from the eye-sight of the world . . .
The lasie minutes linger on their time. . . .

A murderer of the blackest sort it is who, pending the hour for him to act, speaks thus in "Arden of Feversham."³

¹ "The Wounds of Civill War. Lively set forth in the true Tragedies of Marius and Scilla," 1594, 4to; verse and prose; battles on the stage, triumph of Sylla drawn by Moors (Tamburlaine-wise) and followed by a stately cortège, including "prisoners of divers nations and sundry disguises," act iii.; played ab. 1587. On Lodge's non-dramatic works see vol. II. pp. 368, 397, 411, 426, 530.

² See, for example, "The Trueth of the most wicked and secret murthering of John Brewen . . . committed by his owne wife, through the provocation of one John Parker whom she loved," 1592, a pamphlet attributed to Kyd; in "Works," Boas, p. 285.

³ "The lamentable and true tragedie of Master Arden of Feversham in Kent, who was most wickedly murdered by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe," 1592; ed. Warnke and Proescholdt, Halle, 1888, and in Brooke,

Many dramas, too, of the fantastic type, with spirits and goblins, like Peele's "Old Wives Tale," where furies are shown, as well as a conjurer, a ghost, and a magic head speaking in a fountain¹; or Greene's "James IV.," in which a part is allotted to Oberon, king of the fairies, "not so big as the King of Clubs, nor so sharpe as the King of Spades"; or the "Frier Bacon"² of the same, a pseudo-historical drama on the rustic loves of Edward, son of King Henry III., and on the deeds of sorcery of Friar Bacon, who appears in his mysterious cell at Brasenose College surrounded, by his magical mirror, his speaking brazen head, and his familiar devils. Hercules is conjured up "in his lions skin," devils bring forth and carry off personages: "Exeunt roaring"; Friar Bacon succeeds in discovering distant events, but fails in teaching Latin to his man—a comical scene destined to be put again on the stage later, with better effect, by a greater writer.

Mingled with all this, anyhow, anywhere, the fun and sportive drolleries of clowns, numerous dances, scenes with silly constables, and ridiculous Welshmen, Scotchmen, or Frenchmen. At times also, especially in Greene's romantic

"Shakespeare Apocrypha," 1908; attributed to Kyd by C. Crawford, "Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare Gesellschaft," 1903.—"A Warning for Faire Women," 1599, 4to, reprinted *e.g.* by Simpson, "The School of Shakspeare," 1878. Both are grounded on real cases of adultery and murder among middle-class people, which had been in their day the talk of the town. Shakespeare has been named sometimes as a possible author of these plays for no other reason than the excellence of certain poetical passages, a quite insufficient reason. Of the same class, *e.g.* "Two lamentable tragedies, the one of the murther of maister Beech a chandler in Thames Streete," etc., by Yarrington, printed 1601, ed. Bullen, "Old Plays," 1882, vol. iv., the drama beginning thus: "Enter Homicide solus"; "A Yorkshire Tragedy . . . Acted by his Majesties Players at the Globe, written by W. Shakespeare" (far more probably by Wilkins, see B. Dobell in *Notes and Queries*, July 21, 1906), 1608, on a murder committed in 1604; reprinted by Brooke, "Shakespeare Apocrypha."

¹ 1595, "Works," Bullen, vol. i.

² "The honorable Historie of frier Bacon and frier Bongay," 1594, first played at an unknown date; appears in Henslowe's Diary, not as a new play, in 1591-2: "Rd. at fryer bacvne the 19 of february, xvijs. iiijd.," ed. Greg, p. 13.

comedies, some noble speeches, tender love-making and glowing outbursts of lyricism. In his dramatic works, all more or less extravagant, full of improbable if not impossible events, none being of a solid build, shines this same freshness of fancy which had been the chief merit of his novels. Some of his women, chaste and graceful, are the best drawn feminine figures that had yet been seen on the public stage: an Angelica, a Dorothea, the latter disguised as a page, like a heroine of Shakespeare's. Greene also transfers from his novels to his plays his favourite sort of eclogs, showing princes in love with shepherdesses; well spoken all of them, well taught, well read, some in "Euphues," some in ancient history, and expressing themselves as people should who have been born in the realm of Poetry:

Margret. What hopes the Prince to gaine by Lacies death?

Edward. To end the loves twixt him and Margeret.

Margret. Why thinks King Henries sonne that Margrets love
Hangs in the uncertaine ballance of proud time?
That death shall make a discord of our thoughts?
No, stab the earle, and fore the morning sun
Shall vaunt him thrice over the loftie east,
Margret will meet her Lacie in the heavens!¹

At times too, at least if he may be considered the author of "George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield," Robert Greene showed a rarer sight, rarer at least on the stage, peasants in love with country lasses.²

¹ "Frier Bacon," iii. 1. Lacy's letter to test Margaret's feelings: "The bloomes of the almond tree grow in a night, and vanish in a morne; the flies Haemeræ . . ." (iii. 3).

² Anonymous, full of life, connected with the Robin Hood cycle, belongs by its subject to the considerable group of ballads, tales and plays in which the first rôle is given to a valiant, honest and good-humoured man of the people (cf. e.g. "Rauf Coilyear," late fifteenth century, in *Amours*, "Scottish Alliterative Poems," 1897); played by Henslowe's actors, not as a new play, on December 29, 1593; text in Greene, "Plays and Poems." On the authorship question, see Greg, *Modern Language Review*, i. 243.

But, above all, historical dramas were numerous. Nothing less surprising; the enthusiastic admiration for the country's past and present, which was one of the characteristics of the period, could not fail to influence the theatre as well as the other branches of literature. The same tragical or glorious events recorded in their poems by the authors of the "Mirror for Magistrates," or by lyrical poets like Daniel, Drayton or Spenser, were told again in dialogue and made the subject of plays: semi-fabulous histories of Locrine and Lear, reign of King John, histories of the Edwards and the Henries, triumphs of the Hundred Years' War, disasters of the War of the Roses, usurpation and crimes of Richard III., lives of outlaws like Robin Hood, of rebels like Jack Straw, or of latter-day great men who ended tragically, like More, Cromwell, or Wolsey.¹ Badly composed of ill-assorted elements, a medley

¹ See, e.g.: "The lamentable tragedie of Locrine, eldest son of King Brutus," 1595, acted ab. 1586 (Malone Soc. 1908), arbitrarily attributed to Marlowe, Peele, Greene, and even Shakespeare.—"The True Chronicle History of King Leir," 1605, 4to, acted ab. 1588.—"The troublesome raigne of John King of England," 1591.—"The raigne of King Edward the Third," 1596 (in which some have detected the hand of Shakespeare; the play is in any case the work of a true poet).—"The famous victories of Henry the fifth containing the honourable battell of Agincourt," 1598, acted ab. 1580.—"The first part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster," 1594.—"The true Tragedie of Richard the third," 1594.—"A mery geste of Robyn Hood . . . wyth a newe playe for to be played in maye games" (sixteenth century; n.d.).—"The Downfall of Robert earle of Huntington, afterwards called Robin Hood," and "The death of Robert," etc., 1601, two plays by Munday, acted 1598.—"The Life and Death of Jack Strawe, a notable rebell in England," pr. 1593, acted long before.—"Sir Thomas More," a remarkable play, left in MS. and printed by the Shakespeare Soc. 1844 (written before 1590?), see below, p. 269.—"The true Chronicle Historie of . . . Thomas lord Cromwell," registered 1602, acted 1592?—A "Wolsey" and many other lost historical plays figure in Henslowe's Diary. Most of the above-mentioned dramas have been reprinted by Hazlitt ("Shakespeare's Library"), by Dodsley ("Old Plays"), by the Shakespeare Society, by Brooke ("Shakespeare Apocrypha"). See the tables of F. E. Schelling ("The English Chronicle Play," New York, 1902, pp. 275 ff.), according to whose calculation about 150 historical dramas are known to have been represented between 1586 and 1606.

sometimes of puerile monstrosities, these dramas, in which truth was so clumsily told that they often seemed another sort of old wives' tales, enchanted the public by their subject. They deal with our ancestors and with us, thought the hearers; let us listen. When events belonged to a somewhat distant past, they were artificially brought as near as possible to modern times, the better to secure attention. The means resorted to were not very refined; we have seen before what they were: clowneries, allusions to men or deeds of the day, contemporary manners, feelings and costumes attributed to old-time personages; in other words ceaseless anachronisms. To take only one example, but a striking one, in Peele's "Edward I.," where the hero quotes Ariosto, a Queen Eleanor is shown, lewd, perfidious, and bloodthirsty, not at all like the Eleanor of history, not at all like the sweet-faced Queen who sleeps her last sleep at Westminster in her long tunic of gold; but as that princess was a Spaniard, and Spain was hated in Peele's days, the Queen of three hundred years before had to be blackened for the audience to be pleased.¹

It was, however, one of the arguments of the apologists of playwrights that they taught English history: they have "instructed such as cannot reade in the discovery of all our English chronicles; and what man have you now of that weake capacity that cannot discourse of any notable thing recorded even from William the Conqueror, nay from the landing of Brute until this day?"² These tragedies, said Nash, give new life "to our forefathers' valiant actes, that have line long buried in rustie brass and worm-eaten bookes."³ If those teachings were not always

¹ "The famous chronicle of King Edward the first . . . with his returne from the holy land. . . Lastly the sinking of Queene Elinor . . ." 1593; "Works," Bullen, i. 75.

² Thomas Heywood, "Apology for Actors," 1612; Shakespeare Society, 1841, p. 53.

³ "Pierce Penilesse," 1592; Shakespeare Society, p. 59.

strictly accurate, and morose minds did not refrain from pointing it out,¹ at least they kept up the patriotic ardour and loyalism of the hearers.² The worst of these plays succeeded scarcely less well than the best; the rough sketches of forerunners obtained often as much applause as Shakespeare's grandest dramas: patriotism, and not at all the opinion of the learned, decided the case.

IV.

One man, during this preparatory period, rose above the common level; his faults and his genius made of him a connecting link between the predecessors and Shakespeare. The faults are enormous, the genius shines only at times, but with splendid brilliancy. What Voltaire, in a fit of bad humour, said of Shakespeare, is true of Christopher Marlowe: he has "sparks of genius glowing in the midst of a horrible darkness." One of his dramas, besides, is quite apart, among the chaotic attempts of this preliminary epoch.

Born in February, 1564, Marlowe belonged to a humble family, of Canterbury; his father was a master shoemaker; his sister's husband plied the same trade.

¹ "But these that know the histories before they see them acted, are ever ashamed when they have heard what lyes the players insert amongst them."—Anonymous reply to Heywood, 1615; Hazlitt, "Shakespeare's Library," vol. v. p. 408.

² It is not possible, however, to agree with Mr. Symonds, who thus begins his chapter on the old dramas of this sort: "The chronicle play is peculiar to English literature" ("Shakespeare's Predecessors," 1900, p. 289). Without speaking of the "*Mystère du Siège d'Orléans*," written before 1450, to the glory of Joan of Arc, many examples of such plays can be pointed out in the French literature of the sixteenth century: plays on the wars of religion, Coligny, the Guises, Henri IV., and for the past, on Mérové, Gaston of Foix, the battle of Bouvines, etc. (see many of them mentioned by Lanson, *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 1903, pp. 192, ff.) The truth is that, thanks to Marlowe and Shakespeare, England alone produced at that period works deserving a permanent rank in literature.

He was able, however, to receive a complete education, first in the local Grammar School, then at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; many poor children succeeded then, thanks to charitable foundations or to the help of a wealthy neighbour, in studying, attaining notoriety, frequenting the learned and the great, only sometimes to sink afterwards into the depths of low London life, and end miserably. Young Christopher was impetuous, immoderate, rash in words, in actions, in ideas, unable to restrain himself, as loose in his morals as in his beliefs. While yet a student, he translated Ovid's "*Amores*," far from repelled by the licentiousness of the Latin master¹; critics have derided his mistakes; the work is meritorious however for a college student. He returned more than once to the classics, and we know what rank he won for himself, among lyrical poets, with his "*Hero and Leander*," adapted from the Greek.² Master of Arts in 1587 at twenty-three, he settled apparently in London, and the meagre allusions to his life which have come down to us show him writing, year after year, mainly for the Lord Admiral's company, with Alleyn in the title-rôles, grandiloquent and tumultuous dramas which had a considerable success; appreciated for his vigorous mind by the best poets of his day, Drayton, Peele, Chapman, and Shakespeare³; frequenting

¹ Posthumous: "*Epigrammes and Elegies*," Middleburgh, ab. 1597, the "*Epigrammes*" being the work of Sir J. Davies; the "*Elegies*" ("*Amores*"), the work of Marlowe; in rimed verse. "*Works*," ed. Cunningham, n.d., or ed. Bullen, 1885, 3 vols.; "*Marlowes Werke*," ed. Breymann and Wagner, Heilbronn, 1885 (each play issued separately).

² In 1600 appeared: "*Lucans first Book translated line for line, by Chr. Marlow*," in blank verse. On "*Hero and Leander*," see above, vol. II. p. 413. On "*Marlowe at Cambridge*," see C. Moore Smith, *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, iv. 167.

³ Who had a kindly souvenir for him, and quoted one of his lines in "*As You Like It*":

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might:
Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight? (iii. 5).—

Raleigh, Thomas Walsingham, a relative of the Queen's Secretary, Harriott the algebrist, traveller, and astronomer, all of them noted for their boldness of thought. He thus came to pass for an atheist, and proceedings had been begun against him by a Government that burnt people for less radical differences with the established creed, when he died at twenty-nine, in 1593, killed in a quarrel at Deptford "by a bawdy servingman, a rival of his in his lewd love."¹ His career as a playwright had lasted six years.

His first play "Tamburlaine,"² a huge drama in two parts and ten acts, performed the year he left the University, by the Lord Admiral's players, 1587, rivalled

Peele spoke admiringly of him a few days after his death, in the Prologue of the "Honour of the Garter," June, 1593 :

. . . unhappy in thine end,
Marley, the Muses darling for thy verse.

Drayton later, in his epistle to Reynolds, was no less warm in his praise of "Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs"; nor was Ben Jonson in his well-known allusion to "Marlowe's mighty line," 1623.

¹ "Palladis Tamia," 1598, by Meres, who sees in Marlowe's "tragical death" a punishment for his "epicurism and atheism." His burial is recorded in the register of St. Nicholas' Church, Deptford, as having taken place on the 1st of June, 1593.

² "Tamburlaine the Great. Who, from a Scythian Shepheard . . . became a most puissant and mightye Monarque . . . Devided into two Tragical Discourses, as they were . . . shewed upon Stages . . . by the . . . Lord Admyrall, his servantes."—"The second part of the bloody conquests of mighty Tamburlaine, with his impassionate fury for the death of his Lady," etc., London, 1590; anonymous, but Marlowe's authorship seems certain. On the sources of the play, see C. Herford, *Academy*, October 20, 1883, and Faligan, "De Marlovianis Fabulis," Paris, 1887, 8vo, French plays on Tamerlane, p. 111. Owing probably to the popularity won by Marlowe for his hero, such entries as the following appear in the Stationers' Registers: "The two commicall discourses of Tomberlein the cithian shepparde" (a ballad), August 18, 1590; "A booke intituled Histoire du Grand Empereur Tamerlanes, rencontres, escarmouches . . . to be translated into English," July 2, 1597; Arber's Transcript, vol. ii. p. 558, vol. iii. p. 88.

the success of the "Spanish Tragedy" itself: applause, imitation, sneers, it lacked nothing. The new-comer had struck quite naturally the true note, for to flatter the tastes of the crowd, he had had nothing to do but follow his own. All that was prodigious, awful, incredible, immense, delighted his fancy; measureless ambitions were with the poor shoemaker's son, as with so many of his contemporaries, a favourite subject of thought: ambitions of the conqueror, of the machiavelian man of wealth, of the necromancer; deeds of those who could handle armies, treasures, magic. None of the Termagants in ancient mysteries, none of the heroes in the "heroical" dramas of the Restoration, surpass in prowess, crimes, conquests and rant "Tamburlaine the Great, who from a Scythian shepherd became a most puissant and mightye monarque." The highest sounding declamations of Seneca, well known to Marlowe, are like a gentle murmur compared with the Scythian's. Not a fault this, Marlowe considered, but a merit, and at the start he called his audience's attention to it. Hear and see:

The Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatning the world with high astounding tearms.

The hero appears, sweeps away armies, kills right and left, perjures himself, storms towns, destroys nations, makes and unmakes kingdoms. All Asia is brought pell-mell on the stage, multitudinous, turgid and lewd; battles succeed battles; empires are shattered to pieces. Tamburlaine harnesses for his use a team of kings, and never appears but on a chariot drawn by the vanquished princes. He urges them with his whip and with his famous apostrophe:

Hola, ye pampered jades of Asia!

which caused the audience to shudder, and Shakespeare to laugh.¹

Horrible sights succeed one another. Bajazet in his cage breaks his skull against the bars. Turks, Scythians, Egyptians, Persians, all the characters in the drama, believe in "sacred Mahomet," and in Jove, Mercury, and Apollo; Tamburlaine, who has obviously studied with Marlowe at Cambridge, knows mythology and defies Olympus :

Jove, viewing me in armes, lookes pale and wan . . .
Where'er I come the fatall sisters sweat.

On his death bed he summons Apollo to his assistance :

Theridamas, haste to the court of Jove,
Will him to send Apollo hether straight
To cure me, or elles Ile fetch him downe my selfe.

The English dramatist, Whetstone had written shortly before, is most "indiscreete and out of order . . . in three howers ronnes he throwe the worlde, marryes, gets children, makes children men, men to conquer kingdomes, murder monsters, and bringeth Gods from Heaven and fetcheth Divels from Hel."² He is quite right, thought the crowd, he does exactly what we want him to do. Tamburlaine dies at last, after a recapitulation of his prowesses, happy to have fulfilled his destiny, regretting only not to have accomplished a work destined later to bring fame to another sort of conqueror: the digging of the Suez Canal :

That men might quickly sail to India.

¹ Part 2, iv. 3. Shakespeare represents Pistol addressing the frequenters of the "Boar's Head Tavern" in Peele and Marlowe's vein, with snatches drawn from the "Battell of Alcazar" and from "Tamburlaine": "Hollow pamber'd jades of Asia!" ("2 Henry IV.," ii. 4).

² "The right excellent and famous history of Promos and Cassandra," 1578; Dedicatory Epistle.

Tamburlaine soon became a typical and proverbial being; he long continued to be quoted and alluded to, he and his loves, his conquests, and his "pampered jades of Asia."

Marlowe, from the first, adopted the line which was to be *par excellence* the verse of the Elizabethan drama, namely, the blank verse, then chiefly used by authors of the Senecan school.¹ He understood the advantage offered by such a flexible form of expression, the metrical character of which can be increased or extenuated at will, brought so near to prose that the difference is almost imperceptible, or modulated according to the rules of so strict a prosody that it nearly equals the most marked cadences of the classical rimed line. Timid metrists, such as were Marlowe's predecessors, followed conscientiously and to the letter their self-imposed laws, offering in due succession and regular array, five times in each line, one unaccented and one accented syllable, introducing without fail a pause after the second or the third foot, and a more or less perceptible stop at the end of each line. The careless, the ungifted, the easy-going, a numerous crew, observed or did not observe these rules, as was to them most convenient, and justified by their misdeeds the sneer of Voltaire, according to whom "blank verses give no other trouble than to dictate them; they are not more difficult to write than a letter."² But poets in communion with the Muse, like Marlowe, follow the laws or evade them for good reasons, displace

¹ See, for example, "Gorboduc," performed 1562, "Jocasta," by Gascoigne, played 1566, "The Misfortunes of Arthur," printed 1587. Peele's pastoral comedy or masque, "The Araygnement of Paris," printed 1584, is partly in rimed lines and partly in blank verse (as was later Greene's "James IV."). Lyly's mythologico-pastoral play, "The Woman in the Moon," formerly supposed to be his earliest, 1578-81, and now his latest, 1591-3 (Boas, iii. 234), is written in blank verse of remarkable ease and freedom, Cf. above, II. pp. 145, 355.

² Preface to his translation of Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar."

the cæsura, give a light ending to their line, run on the sense without stop from one line to another, shorten the verse or add an extra syllable, according to the general movement and subject of the phrase. They can thus keep nearer to realities and to nature, and yet avoid platitude and vulgarity. Marlowe felt that this was the kind of poetry best suited to his public : just as parks in the English style suit England, and gardens *à la française* Versailles. We are, in France, for clear and straight lines, we love box-bordered walks and rime-bordered verses ; every one his own taste.

As if to justify Whetstone's taunt, after having, in "Tamburlaine," ordered gods down from heaven, Marlowe produced, probably in 1588, his "Dr. Faustus," who "fetcheth Divels from Hel." Self-restraint is as conspicuously absent from this play as from the first, and the parts are even more loosely joined, but here and there shine in the night dazzling sparks of genius.¹

The story of the Christian who sells his soul to the devil can be traced back, under various forms, to the Middle Ages ; it had been rejuvenated in the sixteenth

¹ We possess two different texts, both posthumous and very corrupt : "The tragicall History of D. Faustus," 1604 ; "The tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus," 1616. The play was widely read, and reached a seventh edition in 1631. According to the more or less favourable idea they have formed of Marlowe's purity of taste, critics have more or less liberally attributed to different authors the clumsy or ridiculous parts of the drama, such as we have it. We know, in any case, that Henslowe paid, on the 22nd of November, 1602, four pounds to W. Birde (alias Borne) and S. Rowley "for ther adicyones in doctor fostes" ("Henslowe's Diary," Greg, p. 172), which additions cannot have been of a high order.

The play had been entered in the Stationers' Registers in January, 1601, but no edition of that date is known. Several editions have a woodcut representing Faust in his magic circle, with doctor's cap and sorcerer's wand, conjuring up a most hideous devil (fac-similed in Mantzius, "Skuespilkunstens Historie," Copenhagen, 1901, vol. iii. p. 187). A ballad on Faust was entered in the Stationers' Registers on February 28, 1589 : "A ballad of the Life and Death of Doctor Ffaustus the great cungerer" (Arber, ii. 516).

century by being grafted on to the story of a poor German sorcerer, who had really existed and was called "Faust." His adventures had been the subject of ballads and chap-books, one of which, the "*Historie of the damnable Life and deserved Death of Dr. John Faustus*," was apparently known to Marlowe.¹ His new venture, with handsome Alleyn as Faustus, was again very successful, and the play long held the stage. English actors journeying abroad brought back the story to its native land,² where it was to receive, three centuries later, its definitive shape at the hands of Goethe, and become one of the masterpieces of the world's literature.

The system followed to keep the audience attentive is the same as in "*Tamburlaine*," an accumulation of facts, events, and wonders. Instead of conquests succeeding conquests, deeds of sorcery succeed one another: apparitions, evocations, transhapings; coarse wonders! The illustrious dead come forth in their magnificence or glory; a pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, so often described in mediæval poetry, crosses the stage; hell is discovered with its monsters; devils wriggle and grin on the boards. Faust and Mephistopheles make merry at the expense of the Pope, they throw fireworks among his attendants, snatch dishes and cups from his hands, box his ears, while the Holy Father exclaims:

¹ Translated by "P. F." from the German, "according to the true copie printed at Franckfort" (in 1587), London, 1592, 4to. This translation must have been known to Marlowe either in MS. or through some earlier edition, possibly, but not certainly, alluded to in the words "newly imprinted" figuring on the title. These words, contrary to what is often alleged, do not necessarily imply an earlier text, as cases can be quoted in which they certainly have the meaning of "just now printed"—the equivalent of the modern "just out," and used to the same intent. On the title-page of the first edition of "*Tamburlaine*," 1590, the play is described as "now first and newlie published."

² Between 1608 and 1626. In 1626, English actors played at Dresden, among other works, "*Faust*," the "*Jew of Malta*," the "*Spanish Tragedy*," "*Romeo*," "*Lear*," "*Hamlet*."—Cohn, "*Shakespeare in Germany*," 1865.

O I am slain ! help me, my lords !
O come and help to bear my body hence !

At the sight of such a silly Pope the delighted public roared with laughter. The magic of the two compeers is, most of the time, barely above boyish jokes or jugglers' tricks, but no more was wanted. Faust wore "a false head"; it was cut off in a fight; he rose again, to the terror of the beholders.

But the tragedy underlying those artless inventions is such as to thrill every heart. Faust, like Tamburlaine and like all the heroes of Marlowe, lives in thought beyond the limit of the possible. He thirsts for a knowledge of the secrets of the universe, as the other thirsted for domination over the world. An inward fire gnaws at their hearts; the catastrophe is inevitable, and it will be an awful one; the hour of it is marked in advance for Faust; the doomed sinner will count, one by one, his last minutes, aware that no prayer can save him. The terror of the unknown now fills his whole being, a tremor is on those lips which erewhile had said, with a smile, to the tempter :

This word damnation terrifies not me,
For I confound Hell in Elysium,
My ghost be with the old philosophers.
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me . . .

These same lips imploringly whisper :

Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually. . . .
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike
Oh ! if my soul must suffer for my sin,
Impose some end to my incessant pain.
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years—
A hundred thousand—and at last be saved .
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul ? .

Nothing grander and more tragical had yet been heard on the English stage ; nothing sweeter nor more beautiful either than Faust's apostrophe at the sight of Helen :

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? .
Oh ! thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars .

The success was all the greater that the public believed in the possibility of what it saw ; many asserted that, on one occasion, the conjuring had been so perfectly accomplished that a *real* devil had appeared. There was, Prynne informs us, a "visible apparition of the Devill on the stage at the Bel-Savage Play-house, in Queene Elizabeths dayes, to the great amazement both of the actors and spectators ; whiles they were then prophanely playing the History of Faustus, the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it ; there being some distracted with that fearefull sight."¹ The audience had perhaps some difficulty in discerning the real devil from the sham ones, as these were very "fearefull" too : in a pamphlet of 1604, Lucifer is introduced describing one of his devotees who wore "a head of hair like one of my devils in 'Doctor Faustus,' when the old theatre cracked and frightened the audience."²

The "Rich Jew of Malta"³ is another sort of Tamburlaine ; here again accumulation is the means of pleasing resorted to ; an accumulation, this time, of crimes, fearful revenges, and bloody conspiracies, perpetrated by so black

¹ "Histrio-mastix, the Players Scourge" ; London, 1633, fol. 556.

² "The Blacke Booke," Middleton's "Works," ed. Bullen, vol. viii. p. 13.

³ Acted in 1589 or 1590, often revived, licensed in 1594, printed only in 1633 by the care of Th. Heywood : "The famous Tragedy of the rich Jew of Malta," 4to. The part of the Jew was "presented by so inimitable an actor as Mr. Alleyn" (Heywood's Dedication).

a monster that the like had never been seen : the more interesting to see, felt the audience, and "the Jewe" constantly figures accordingly in Henslowe's pages. The scene is laid at Malta, among Catholics whom the poet detests, Turks whom he execrates, and Jews whom he abhors ; monstrosities and horrors fill the play. Barabas the Jew, the principal character in the drama, commits evil for evil's sake when he cannot commit it for his own profit :

As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights,
And kill sick people groaning under walls ;
Sometimes I go about and poison wells (etc., etc.).

He blows up a whole army, he poisons a whole convent ; sent to be tortured, he dies on the way, having absorbed a drug ; his corpse is thrown from the top of the walls and falls on the stage ; but he jumps to his feet : the drug was that kind of soporific which was to be passed on from his lips to those of Juliet and from the lips of Juliet to those of Imogen and many others. The last, the most ferocious, and most ridiculous of his machinations fails : "The cable cut, a cauldron discovered into which Barabas falls," and is boiled to death before us. "Item, j cauderm for the Jewe," we read in the list of properties belonging to the Lord Admiral's men. Hardly any rest, nor any relief ; scarcely do we find a few of those dreamy touches of poetry¹ so frequent in Shakespeare ; everywhere death and tortures, hideous grimacings and the impossible combinations of those gruesome events wherewith nightmares are made. Such plots

¹ Such as the passage at the beginning of act ii. .

Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings (etc.).

were considered machiavelian ; Machiavel had come to be held the Mephistopheles of politics ; and the Jew's instincts being devilish, Machiavel in person had spoken the Prologue and introduced Barabas to the audience :

I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.
 . . . Grace him as he deserves,
And let him not be entertain'd the worse
Because he favours me.

Same means of pleasing again, but even less art, in the "Massacre at Paris with the Death of the Duke of Guise,"¹ an over-sombre drama written to take advantage of the horror caused by the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The historical facts would, one might suppose, have been dark enough in this case. Marlowe did not think so, and added to their blackness. Catherine of Medici is the Barabas of the play ; the slaughter of the Protestants is not sufficient for her, she compasses that of her own son Charles IX. ; she is the mistress of Guise, etc., etc. Marlowe had, as we know, to compete with the neighbouring bull and bear baitings, and to surpass the next-door circus in the art of thrilling his audience's hardened nerves. He succeeded very well, and sometimes under the name of "The Gwies,"

¹ London, 8vo, no date, ab. 1600, a very imperfect text ; seems to be the play mentioned as a new one by Henslowe in his Diary, 30th January, 1593 : "Rd at the tragedey of the gvyes [Guise] iij^l. xiiij^s." (ed. Greg, p. 15). The drama ends with the murder of King Henri III. of France, who, just before dying, becomes anti-papist and sends his compliments to Queen Elizabeth,

Whom God hath blest for hating popery.

Henri had died on August 2, 1589. Without speaking of several anonymous plays with which the name of Marlowe has been hypothetically associated, we possess a "Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage, played by the children of her Majestie's Chappell, written by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nash," London, 1594, probably an early attempt left unfinished by Marlowe, drawn from Virgil, but with the Virgilian decorum not always well observed : "Avaunt, old witch," says Venus to Juno (iii. 2).

sometimes of "The Masacar," the play often reappears in Henslowe's Diary.

When, however, he gave "Edward the Second" ¹ he offered to his public a much more surprising wonder than all those in "Faust," "The Jew," and "The Massacre." Here we have the first well conceived and solidly built tragedy in English literature, a well joined one, with carefully drawn characters, interesting and full of life. Fine separate scenes had been presented before, now we have a complete work ; nothing more meritorious nor rarer. All the vulgar means of pleasing having been discarded, needless to say that the play proved the least successful of Marlowe's works, but it is none the less his dramatic masterpiece, and the moment of its appearance is a memorable one in the annals of the stage.

Historical truth is sufficiently, and human truth admirably, observed ; the exposition is clear and awakens interest from the first. The play is opened by Gaveston in exile ; he is reading a letter from Edward, who has just ascended the throne and recalls him to England. The ambitious favourite is in ecstasy at the contemplation of his own fortune :

What need the arctic people love starlight,
To whom the sun shines both by day and night?
Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers !
My knee shall bow to none but to the king.
As for the multitude, they are but sparks,
Raked up in the embers of their poverty.

While he is thus dreaming of a life worthy of the gods, the very tempest that is to carry him away begins to gather. The nobles of ancient stock shudder at the prospect of the

¹ "The troublesome raigne and lamentable death of Edward the Second . . . with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer. As . . . acted . . . by . . . the Earl of Pembroke his servants," London, 1594, 2nd ed. 1598 ; date of performance unknown.

Gascon adventurer's triumphant return. They exchange haughty words with the King. "The sword," says Edward, shall

. . hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.

Lancaster retorts :

Four earldoms have I besides Lancaster—
Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester,
These will I sell, to give my soldiers pay,
Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm.¹

The inevitable effect of such antagonisms and the logical development of characters, lead step by step the heroes of the play to their catastrophe : harsh, proud, and jealous temper of the nobles ; feminine, fawning, vindictive temper of Gaveston, with a tinge of anxious melancholy and bitterness, caused by the thought of his low origin and his vertiginous fortune ; weak and rash temper of the King, violent in words, feeble in deeds. His mind is a disordered one ; unequal to his royal task, he knows neither how to master

¹ I. i. Examples of this haughty, picturesque style, familiar to the French romantics of the nineteenth century, abound in the play :

Young Mortimer. This t[a]ttered ensign of my ancestors,
Which swept the desert shore of that dead sea,
Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,
Will I advance upon this castle's walls.
Drums, strike alarum, raise them from their sport,
And ring aloud the knell of Gaveston (ii. 4).

Sent to the block by young Edward III., the same Mortimer says :

. . . Seeing there was no place to mount up higher
Why should I grieve at my declining fall?
Farewell, fair Queen ; weep not for Mortimer,
That scorns the world, and as a traveller
Goes to discover countries yet unknown (v. 6).

himself nor others. His passionate tenderness for the favourite effaces all other feelings in him :

What, Gaveston ! welcome—kiss not my hand . . .
Why should'st thou kneel ? know'st thou not who I am ?
Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston ! . . .
And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land
Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence.

Like all weak beings conquered by passion, having what he cherishes, he defies the universe, laughs at threats, fears nothing, scorns the Pope and his menaces, the French King and his invading army :

A trifle ! we'll expel him when we please.

He has raised within his soul an intangible and invisible fortress, shielding from the view of the profane and from the rumours of the world his inner thoughts and his happiness. But the world is the stronger ; the favourite is taken and killed ; after the short joy of an incomplete revenge, Edward, captured in his turn, yields to fate and ceases to resist : his dreamland fortress has vanished. His calamity is then so great, his plaint so touching, his end so awful, that our scorn is turned into pity. For we are shown that, before dying, he has understood ; though a king, he has not reigned ; he feels, as it were, a retrospective terror in perceiving what are the harsh realities of a world in which he had lived as if he had been absent from it ; let his example be a warning :

Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I.

With the "Jew" we were still far from the "Merchant of Venice" ; with "Edward II." we are carried beyond "Richard II."

A complete arsenal of infallible means for reaching success, admirable samples of rich lyrical poetry ; thanks to Marlowe, a unique model of a well-built play, logically developed from beginning to end, in a style sober and strong, a blank verse varied in its pauses and harmony, easy to make even more flexible, the true verse of the English stage : all this was available when Fame began to cast her first and very faint rays upon that player's servant, that "Johannes factotum," who was to carry the dramatic art of his country to heights unknown before him, inaccessible after.

CHAPTER VI.

*SHAKESPEARE—PERSONAL AND LITERARY BIOGRAPHY.*¹

I.

IN the course of the long journey which he undertook through England, to describe the towns and rivers, and to commemorate the historical souvenirs of his country, Camden visited Warwickshire, and, after having recalled the high deeds of Guy of Warwick, "that hero, the subject of so many songs," he described a little river called the Avon: "Swelling in its course, the Avon first passes by Charlecote, the abode of the noble knightly family of the Lucies . . . then by Stratford, a rather pretty market town that owes all its fame to two of its sons, John of Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury, who built the church,

¹ Among thousands of others, many of which are of great value, the following works will be found especially useful:

TEXTS: *e.g.* the great Cambridge ed., by W. Aldis Wright and W. G. Clark, 1893, 40 vols. (condensed into one, "Globe edition," Macmillan); Furness's "Variorum" ed., Philadelphia, 1871, ff. (one large vol. per play; "Hamlet" fills two); the "Leopold Shakspeare," important introd. by Furnivall; the "Old-spelling Shakespeare," by the same, 1907, ff.; the "Temple Shakespeare," elegant little vols., ed. Gollancz, 1894, ff.; the Herford ed., 1899, 10 vols., good introductions and brief notes; Dowden and Craig's "Arden Shakespeare," 1899, ff., one vol. per play; the handsome Stratford Shakespeare, ed. Bullen, Stratford-on-Avon, 1904, ff., 10 vols., 4to; the "Century Shakespeare," ed. Furnivall and J. Munro, 1908, 40 sm. vols.

and Hugh Clopton, Mayor of London, who built, at great cost, the stone bridge of fourteen arches on the Avon."

The 1623 folio has been reprinted by Booth, 1862-3, 4to, and facsimiled, with a "census" of surviving copies, by Sidney Lee, Oxford, 1902; the four seventeenth century folios have been issued in facsimile by Methuen (ed. Pollard), 1904, fol.; the quartos are being reprinted by the "New Shakspeare Society." Cf. Lounsbury, "The Text of Shakespeare," New York, 1906.

GRAMMARS AND LEXICONS: E. A. Abbott, "A Shakespearian Grammar"; W. Franz, "Shakespeare Grammatik," 1900; A. Schmidt, "Shakespeare Lexicon," 1874, ed. Sarrazin, 1902; A. Dyce, "Glossary to Shakespeare," ed. Littledale, 1902; Mrs. Cowden Clarke, "Concordance to Shakespeare," 1885; J. Bartlett, "Complete Concordance," 1894; A. J. Ellis, "Early English Pronunciation," 1869; W. Viëtor, "Shakespeare's Pronunciation," Marburg, 1906, 2 vols.

ORIGINALS FOLLOWED BY SHAKESPEARE; HIS READING: Hazlitt and Collier, "Shakespeare's Library," 1875, 6 vols.; "The Shakespeare Classics," ed. Gollancz, 1907, ff. (Shakespeare's originals in modern spelling); W. G. Boswell-Stone, "Shakespeare's Holinshed," 1896, 4to; W. W. Skeat, "Shakespeare's Plutarch," 1892; Anders, "Shakespeare's Books," Berlin, 1904.

BIOGRAPHIES: Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," 1st ed., 1881, 10th illus., 1898 (including the transcription of all known deeds and records concerning the poet and his family); Fleay, "Chronicle History of the Life and Work of Shakespeare," 1886 (table of all the dramas registered from 1584 to 1640); Sidney Lee, "A Life of W. Shakespeare," 1st ed., 1898; large illus. ed., 1899; J. W. Gray, "Shakespeare's Marriage," 1905; Mrs. Charlotte C. Stopes, "Shakespeare's Family," 1901; W. Raleigh, "Shakespeare," in "English Men of Letters," 1907.

ESSAYS AND COMMENTARIES (innumerable): Coleridge, "Lectures and Notes on Shakspeare," Ashe ed., 1902 (the lectures are of 1811-12); W. Hazlitt, "Characters of Shakespeare's Plays," 1817; Dowden, "Shakspeare, his Mind and Art," 1875, and his little vol., "Shakspeare," in Macmillan's "Primers"; A. C. Swinburne, "A Study of Shakespeare," 1880; B. Wendell, "W. Shakespeare, a Study in Elizabethan Literature," New York, 1894; F. S. Boas, "Shakspeare and his Predecessors," 1896; G. Brandes, "W. Shakspeare, a Critical Study," 1898, 2 vols. (trans. from the Danish). In French: Beyle (Stendhal), "Racine et Shakespeare," 1823; Guizot, "Shakespeare et son temps," 1852; Victor Hugo, "W. Shakespeare," 1864; Lamartine, "Shakespeare et son œuvre," 1865; Alf. Mézières (3 vols. on Shakespeare, his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors); Stapfer, "Shak. et l'antiquité," 1879; J. Darmesteter, "Shakespeare," 1889. German criticism: e.g. Works of Schlegel, Goethe (notably in "Wilhelm Meister"), Gervinus, Elze, Ulrici, Delius, Kreyssig, Alois Brandl, etc.

FAME: Ingleby and L. T. Smith, "Centurie of Prayse"; Furnivall, "300 fresh Allusions," N. Shak. Soc.; Lacroix, "Influence de Shakespeare sur le

Camden having written in Latin, his book, published in 1586 and constantly reprinted, was read on the Continent, and, for a long while, all descriptions and all geographical dictionaries, copying one another, never failed to repeat that Stratford's claim to celebrity lay in having given birth to a lord mayor and an archbishop. Such was the case, among others, with Jean Blaeu, who reproduced the statement unchanged in his great "*Théâtre du Monde*," 1645.

Stratford was, in the sixteenth century, a small town of fourteen hundred inhabitants, with "two or three very lardge stretes besyde bake lanes," wrote Leland; "one of the principall stretes ledithe from est to west, another from southe to northe . . . the towne is reasonably well buyldyd of tymber."¹ It has now eight thousand inhabitants; it is quiet and prosperous; the fertility of the surrounding fields has enriched it; it has many red houses, with bay windows and shining plate-glass; gardens of tulips bordered with turf, so well kept that they look like silken flowers embroidered on green velvet. Here and there subsist ancient dwellings of pre-Shakespearian time, built of brick and wood, with dark varnished rafters and roofs uneven and low, as though bent with age; the Guild chapel, with its broad Gothic windows and faint traces of

Théâtre Français," Brussels, 1856; F. Thimm, "*Shakespeariana*," 2nd ed., 1872; my "*Shakespeare in France*," 1899; chap. xx. of S. Lee's "*Life*."

LEARNED SOCIETIES.—Many important texts and interesting critical studies have been published by the "*Shakespeare Society*," founded in 1841, the "*New Shakspeare Society*," founded by Dr. Furnivall in 1874, the German societies "*Anglia*" and "*Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft*," whose "*Jahrbuch*" (ed. Al. Brandl and W. Keller) contains, *e.g.*, an excellent bibliography of the works published in each year.

N.B.—It must not be forgotten, while reading this list, or any similar one, that the British Museum Catalogue contains, under the word "*Shakespeare*," about four thousand items.

¹ "*The Itinerary of John Leland, in or about the years 1535-43*," ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, London, 1907-8, 8vo, Part iv. p. 48.

the paintings which, up to the nineteenth century, covered its nave,¹ the old Grammar school, and near the water and the outstretching fields the main church, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, raised on the site of an older structure, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, conspicuous by its tall steeple, and surrounded with large trees on which caw the rooks. Beneath the walls glides "Avon's winding streame,"² reflecting the blue and white of the sky, bathing the green meadows. Tepid vapours, impregnated with the scents of earth, float, stirred by light breezes, in the circle of the low hills which undulate, recede, and melt into the grey clouds on the horizon.

In the days when the town's only glory was still its lord mayor and its archbishop, lived, in Henley Street, a small merchant called John Shakespeare, a common surname in that region and then quite obscure.³ He followed several trades, as people often do in the country; he was glover, butcher, wool-dealer, husbandman. He enters into history in the most unpoetical manner, figuring for the first time in a public document, as guilty of having established a dunghill in the street, "*sterquinarium in vico vocato*

¹ Rebuilt at the end of the fifteenth century by Hugh Clopton. The pictures represented Doomsday, the legend of the Cross, the death of Becket, St. George and the Dragon, etc. A "restoration" of the chapel in the early years of the nineteenth century practically destroyed them (Bloom, "Shakespeare's Church," 1902, p. 259). They were, however, reproduced in colours by T. Fisher in his "Ancient allegorical and legendary Paintings . . . at Stratford," ed. Nichols, London, 1838, fol.

² Scarce ended their song, but Avons winding streame
By Warwick entertaines the high-complexion'd Leame :
And as she thence along to Stratford on doth straine,
Receiveth the little Heile the next into her traine ;
Then taketh in the Stour.

Drayton, "Poly-olbion," 1613, 13th song (the quotation follows an account of Guy of Warwick's high deeds).

³ It has been traced in 23 localities of Warwickshire, about that period : "Shakespeare's Family," by Mrs. Stopes, 1901, p. 10. On other William Shakespeares, see notes by the same in the *Athenæum*, Aug. 18 and 25, 1906.

Hendley Street." He was, as well as two others, sentenced, in April, 1552, to pay a fine of twelve pence, a large fine for the time, betokening a large dunghill. We see him grow little by little in importance, buy landed property, marry, in 1557, Mary Arden, daughter of a rich farmer of near-by Wilmcote, become a burgess of the town, fill small municipal functions. He had first two daughters, who died in childhood, then a son, and the vicar of Holy Trinity, little suspecting the veneration with which the inscription he was entering that day in his register would be considered later, carelessly wrote in faulty Latin :

" 1564

April 26

Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspere."¹

Such is the date of the poet's baptism ; the exact day of his birth is unknown. Other children were born : Gilbert, in 1566 ; Joan, in 1569 ; Anne, in 1571, who died in childhood ; Richard, in 1574 ; Edmund, in 1580. The poet's early years were those of his parents' greatest prosperity. John Shakespeare became alderman, then, in 1568, high bailiff (mayor), of Stratford ; he was called " Mr. " (master) in public deeds. He settled comfortably

¹ So at least reads the register, wherein all previous entries, from 1558, were transcribed in 1600 ; all those concerning Shakespeare and his family are to be found in Halliwell-Phillipps, " Outlines," 1898, ii. 51. The orthography of the name was variable, as was usual at that period for all names, even when written by those who bore them. The poet was no exception ; having several signatures to give for the same deed, his will, he varied their form, writing in one place Shakspere, in another Shakespeare. The only two works he published himself, his " Venus " and his " Lucrece," are preceded by dedications signed William Shakespeare, and the fact is of importance, since the author had not only to sign the original MS., but to see it again in proof, and since it was a question of poems made public by his care, offered to his noble patron, and, in his eyes, more worthy of this honour than any of his plays. This orthography is, moreover, that of tradition, taken as a whole ; it is that of the first edition of his works, published by his fellow actors in 1623. On his cenotaph the name is spelt Shakspeare ; on his wife's slab Shakespeare.

in the house in Henley Street which passes, wrongly as it seems, for the poet's birthplace; it is, however, certain that Shakespeare grew up there. It consists of two dwellings made into one, both of which belonged to his father, then to himself, and comprise a ground floor and a first floor, with garrets above, under the gabled, sloping roof. The lower rooms have a flag-stone pavement and large chimneys of brick and oak in plainest peasant style; under the heavy, rough-hewn mantel two little niches, serving as seats, permitted one to sit sheltered from the wind and warmed by the fire. A rude wooden staircase leads to the upper storey, very low ceiled, oak floored, its partitions covered with inscriptions and names which are not all "*nomina stultorum*": those of Walter Scott, Dickens, and Tennyson may be seen there. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, part of the house was a butcher's shop, and part was an inn, the sign thereof being "The Swan and Maidenhead." It was bought by subscription in 1846, entirely restored, and presented to the town. In the garden, Shakespearian flowers are cultivated, those that Ophelia wreathed into garlands, and Perdita distributed at the sheep-shearing. The dwelling has become a place of worship for pilgrims of all nations, and its walls, long used to vulgar sights, have, in our days, seen a princess, of Stuart and Plantagenet blood, destined to wear an imperial crown, fall on her knees at the threshold.

Without anything suggestive of such a future, little William grew up there in Elizabethan days, among his brothers and sisters, receiving the summary education of the Grammar school, where he learnt, says Jonson, "small Latine and lesse Greeke," but where, at all events, he received some tincture of antiquity.¹ His

¹ Jonson's lines to the memory of Shakespeare, 1623. As Shakespeare certainly knew some Latin, and could scarcely have got it elsewhere than at the Grammar school of his native place (the most accessible one and with no fees

parents, then prosperous, wanted him to know more than they: the poet's mother signed with a cross, and, as for his father, the proof exists that he could write his name, but also that he sometimes saved himself that trouble by making simply his mark. What was taught for nothing at the school of his native town was all the public education Shakespeare received. Unlike Greene, Lodge, Nash, Marlowe, Marston, Peele, and many others of his literary competitors, he never went to a university. Like the Queen herself, he died without having ever crossed the Channel.

Averred facts and tradition agree in showing him ardent and impetuous from his youth, free in his manners and in his morals. Tradition represents him stealing the game of "the noble knightly family" of Charlecote, punished by Sir Thomas Lucy, and harbouring against him

(to pay), it is practically certain that he was taught there. An endowment had provided for the master's salary. "There is," says Leland, in his description of Stratford, "a grammar-schole on the sowthe syde of this chapell," the Guild chapel, "of the foundation of one Jolif, a mastar of arte, borne in [Stratford], whereabout he had some patrimonye; and that he gave to this schole" ("Itinerary," L. T. Smith, iv. 48). For having contributed, be it ever so little—for the school had been reorganised under Edward VI.—to Shakespeare's instruction, the memory of "one Jolif" deserves to be honoured. To the Stratford school, children came "reddy to enter into the accydenche and princypalles of Grammer" (document of Dec. 20, 1554; see Leach, in Page's "Warwickshire," ii., 1908, p. 334). Children, in such schools, used Lily's grammar (above, II. p. 49); they were made familiar with the wisdom of the ancients through the "*Sententiæ Pueriles pro primis Latine lingue tyronibus, ex diversis Scriptoribus collectæ*" (Lipsiæ, 1544, 8vo, several editions), and taught to try speaking, through one of the accepted collections of "*Colloquia*" (above, II. p. 53). They were made acquainted in some degree with Ovid, Cicero, Virgil, Terence, Plautus, Horace, Seneca, and that modern classic Mantuanus. Sometimes a smattering of Greek was also given. At Stratford, in Shakespeare's days, the schoolmasters (1572, ff.) were called Walter Roche (fellow of Corpus Christi and graduate of Oxford), Hunt and Jenkins, both, it seems, Oxford graduates. In accordance with the royal charter (1553), there was only "one master or pedagogue" at Stratford, and he must have had difficulty in teaching alone a number of children of different ages. As pointed out by Leach, all allusions by Shakespeare to schools or schoolmasters leave no uncertainty as to his distaste for either.

a grudge, unmistakable traces of which appear in his plays.¹ Authentic documents show him hastening, for reasons which have been the occasion of endless discussions, the preliminaries of a marriage with Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a small husbandman of Shottery, near Stratford. To the more than probable displeasure of his family, the youth of eighteen had become engaged to Anne, who was twenty-six; he married her in November or December, 1582,² and six months later their first child saw the light: "1583, B[irth]—May 26. Susanna, daughter to William Shakspeare," reads the register of Holy Trinity Church. In 1585 twins were born, Hamnet and Judith; at twenty-one Shakespeare had three children. Meanwhile his parents' affairs had declined; they were reduced to loans and make-shifts.

What could be done in such troubles? A family to rear, parents in distress, powerful neighbours hostile: everything combined to induce the young man to go and seek his fortunes elsewhere. He started for London alone and without resources. For some years he disappears completely; when we find him again, in 1592, his course is laid out, he belongs to the stage, and his first successes already cause anxiety to those in possession of public favour. Why actor and playwright, rather than glover, printer, grocer: printer like his compatriot Field³; grocer,

¹ If the motives can be contested, the reality of the grudge cannot: ridicule cast on the Lucy coat of arms in "Merry Wives," i. i. The identification of Sir Thomas himself with Justice Shallow is, however, absolutely hypothetical; some traits in no way answer caricatural intentions.

² Later than the 28th of November, when a bond was drawn at Worcester in view of the intended marriage; text in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," ii. p. 55, and Gray, "Shakespeare's Marriage," p. 202.

³ Who printed, with a care then uncommon, much excellent poetry, including his fellow-townsmen's "Venus" and "Lucrece," Harington's version of "Orlando Furioso," Chapman's "Odyssey," etc. See list in Mrs. Stopes' "Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries," Stratford, 1907, p. 18. The two young men were of the same age; their parents were neighbours and

like his other compatriot Sadler, come from Stratford to London at about the same time as himself? Evidently because he had a different vocation, awakened perhaps, as early as his Stratford days, when travelling troupes would come and give performances. His father favoured them and had, to our knowledge, two of them, the Queen's players, and the Earl of Worcester's, act before him in the Guildhall when he was bailiff.¹

The dramatist's works show a great familiarity with mystery plays and their noisy Herod, moralities and their facetious Vice, with ballad-singers, jugglers, and jesters; he came across them again no doubt in the capital, but they were most likely for him childhood associations, seen at their best, especially the latter sort, at the Stratford "great fayre on Holy-Rode daye, 14 of Sept." mentioned by

friends. Field had been apprenticed to the famous Vautrollier, a French Huguenot, whose daughter he married and successor he was. See Plomer, "Short History of English Printing," 1900, p. 117; S. Lee, "Shakespeare's Venus in facsimile," 1905, p. 39; Mrs. Stopes, *ut supra*, p. 8.

¹ The same building, still in existence, with low-ceiled rooms supported by strong oaken rafters, served as Guildhall and Grammar school; it adjoins the Guild chapel in Chapel Street. What took place on the coming of strolling players is well known to us, having been minutely described, in his old age, by one who had witnessed such a performance, at the same period when Shakespeare, then a child, probably stood "betweene his [father's] leggs," and got an early glimpse of theatrical life: "In the city of Gloucester the manner is, as I think it is in other like corporations, that, when players of enterludes come to towne, they first attend the Mayor to enforme him what noble-mans servants they are, and so to get licence for their publike playing; and if the Mayor like the actors, or would show respect to their lord and master, he appoints them to play their first play before himselfe and the Aldermen and Common Counsell of the city; and that is called the Mayors play, where every one that will comes in without money, the Mayor giving the players a reward as hee thinks fit to shew respect unto them. At such a play my father tooke me with him, and made mee stand betweene his leggs as he sate upon one of the benches, where wee saw and heard very well. The play was called the Cradle of Security."—Willis's "Mount Tabor . . . published in the yeare of his age 75," London, 1639 (the author must therefore have been born the same year as Shakespeare); in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," 1898, i. p. 43. The reward given by Shakespeare's father to the Queen's players was nine shillings and to the Earl of Worcester's players only twelve pence.

Leland.¹ The hell mouth, if he found it among his theatre's properties, was no new sight for him; a large sized one was painted on the wall of the Guild chapel at Stratford, and he was, perhaps, recalling personal remembrances when he made Lady Macbeth say:

'Tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil.²

Destitute of money, of notoriety, of influential friends, of a college education, his beginnings could not but be of the most modest. According to tradition, the first employment which connected him with the dramatic world consisted in holding the horses of the well-to-do spectators who frequented the Theatre or the Curtain. He seems to have been afterwards an actor's boy or page; perhaps one of those "players' men" satirised by Gosson, hired by comedians as men of all work, and discovered one day "prating on the stage" and parading "under gentlemen's noses in sutes of silke," when only "the Sunday before they begged an almes."³

Certain it is, from the results, that this preliminary period was well employed. The prentice-poet, the prentice-actor, watched, observed, noted the tastes of the crowd, made himself familiar with the approved means of pleasing, perfected his education (without ever completing it fully) by reading, chiefly, as was natural, works connected with dramatic art: novels and romances, old plays which could be remodelled, national chronicles, classics translated, a few of these read also perhaps in the original. His knowledge of French, as we shall see, cannot be doubted; his passion for music is certain. In all his works there is no subject he recurs to so often; to him, music

¹ "Itinerary," ed. Lucy T. Smith, Part iv., p. 48.

² II. 2; see *supra*, vol. I. p. 471.

³ "School of Abuse," 1579, Arber's ed., p. 39.

heightens joys, softens sorrow, charms, cures, consoles ; it inspires happy decisions :

Let music sound while he doth make his choice,

says Portia, while Bassanio hesitates between the three caskets ;¹ it can alleviate even the anguish of death. His Henry IV. forms the same wish,² expressed since by that exquisite poet, Sully Prudhomme ; like our contemporary, Shakespeare could enjoy the singing of a "*doux air qui touche, avec peu de voix*"—

Oh fellow ! come, the song we had last night :
Mark it, Cesario ; it is old and plain :
The spinsters and knitters in the sun. . .
Do use to chaunt it.³

To him, whosoever likes not music has a dark soul : " Let no such man be trusted." ⁴

Among his companions Shakespeare shone as an eloquent and even exuberant talker, gay, facetious, inexhaustible, and he knew also how to listen, how to

¹ " Merchant," iii. 2.

² Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends,
Unless some dull favourable hand
Will whisper music to my weary spirit (" 2 Henry IV.," iv. 4).

³ " Twelfth Night," ii. 4.—

Vous irez chercher ma pauvre nourrice
Qui mène un troupeau,
Et vous lui direz que c'est mon caprice,
Au bord du tombeau,

D'entendre chanter, tout bas, de sa bouche,
Un air d'autrefois,
Simple et monotone, un doux air qui touche,
Avec peu de voix . . . (" L'Agonie").

⁴ " Merchant," v. 1. One of the reasons why Cæsar mistrusts Cassius is that "he hears no music," i. 2.

drink, he was indulgent to others and to himself, not exacting, no precisian; he was all things to all men, full of resources, ability and ideas, the very factotum of the theatre as soon as he had set foot in it. The first certain allusion to him as an author is found in the strange confession and last will of the famous bohemian of letters, Robert Greene, a "Groats-worth of Wit, bought with a million of Repentaunce."¹ In this treatise, written as he was dying, Greene, it will be remembered, recommends his fellow dramatists, Nash, Peele,² and Marlowe, to live better lives than his, to turn aside from that profane *milieu* where reigns neither virtue nor good faith, and no one is sure of enjoying the fame he has earned. The first-comer takes it from you, and, remodelling your plays, transfers to himself the glory. "Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tigers heart wrapt in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is, in his owne conceit, the onely Shake-scene in a countrie." Shake-scene for Shake-speare; "tiger's heart," etc., a parody on a line of "Henry VI.,"³ then unpublished, but already played and known to have been altered by the new-comer: the allusion was more than transparent. It was offensive and unfair; for the young poet, in seeking to earn his livelihood by remodelling plays, was doing what was then quite usual; ⁴ above

¹ ". . . Written before his death and published at his dying request," London [1592], seventh ed. 1637; "Works," Grosart, 1881 ff., vol. xii. p. 144.

² Perhaps Lodge.

³ O, tiger's heart, wrapp'd in a woman's hide!

("3 Henry VI.," i. 4.)

⁴ What caused Greene to be so sensitive was that he prided himself precisely on his plots, rough as they are in our eyes, so that any one adopting them and decking them with poetry was sure to cause him keen irrita-

all he in no wise aspired to appropriate any one else's fame ; he printed nothing, and, only too happy to emerge little by little from poverty, was very far from dreaming of immortality. The dying man's injustice was so obvious that the friend entrusted by him with the care of printing his lucubration, and who had already mitigated several of his attacks, Henry Chettle, offered the same year apologies to, as it seems, the supposed "upstart crow": "I am as sory," did he write, "as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes ; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that approoves his Art."¹

In 1592, then, the young man who had come penniless from Stratford to try and make his way in the metropolis had succeeded. At twenty-eight he had a livelihood, a profession, and, without having sought it, an incipient reputation. If his name was still ignored by the crowd, who enjoyed his works without paying much attention as yet to their author, it was known in literary circles ; the envious were showing signs of anxiety, the friends of art applauded. Thenceforth began for him a double existence: in London, the life of a poet, artist, and lover ; in Stratford, where he reappeared from time to time, the life of a respected citizen, who was a "gentleman" and was called "Mr." (Master) : two very different people, the "Will" of London and the "Mr. Shakespeare" of Stratford.

tion. Greene acknowledged Nash's superiority in everything except plots : "Hee subscribing to me," says Nash, "in everything but plotting plaies, wherein he was his crafts master."—"Have with you," 1596 ; "Works," McKerrow, iii. 132.

¹ "Kind-Harts Dreame," undated, but written before December 8, 1592 ; "To the Gentlemen Readers." That Shakespeare is meant has been contested, but seems most probable.

II.

His literary activity lasted about twenty-five years, commencing toward 1588, the year of the Armada, and ending toward 1613. During that period he composed, besides his poems, thirty-seven plays; Racine left only twelve. His contemporaries are unanimous in noting his incredible facility. His most wonderful inventions were not hard-sought finds; they occurred to him, he did not hunt for them. Sometimes the radiant image or profound thought that came to his mind was a remembered, not an invented, one: he could scarcely have told which, nor did he care; he laboured no more in one case than in the other. What might seem to us the slowly-ripened fruit of deep and patient meditations has been written with prompt, not to say feverish pen, without an erasure. The comedians who profited by this fecundity praised it with enthusiasm; rivals, especially learned rivals of more laborious mind, blamed it: all acknowledged it. "His mind and hand went together," wrote his fellow-players, "and what he thought he uttered with that easinesse that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."¹ "Players," Ben Jonson wrote thereupon, "have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penn'd, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath beene, 'Would he had blotted a thousand!' which they thought a malevolent speech"; but it was they I wanted to blame "for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend

¹ Heminge and Condell's address "To the great variety of Readers," prefixed to their edition of Shakespeare's Works, the famous "first folio," below, p. 348. The players who, in imitation of this literary venture, published, some years later, Beaumont and Fletcher's works in folio (some of these players having figured in Shakespeare's troupe), mention, in their dedication, the great dramatist's plays, and, wanting to characterise them in a single word, call them "flowing compositions"; below, p. 352, n. 2.

wherein he most faulted. . . . I lov'd the man, and doe honour his memory, on this side Idolatry, as much as any." His personal charm, his manifold qualities, were, thought Jonson, of a high order; what a pity he could not check himself in time! "He flow'd with that facility that sometime it was necessary it should be stop'd." ¹

Time has passed; the poet's fame has increased to a prodigious degree; some play that he wrote in six months inspires volumes of commentaries and absorbs the life of an exegete. Admiration has changed little by little into worship, love into a religion, a real religion, with its rites, its dogmas, and, above all, its mysteries, to say nothing of its excommunications, which are very solemn and noisy. In the midst of the chants or imprecations, in the pomp of ceremonies, the plain voice of truth is, at times, scarcely audible; it is hard to distinguish it when, amid the incense and the flowers, rises the music of hymns,

Sur l'orgue universel des peuples prosternés.

These chants and modern music have, as we shall see, their grandeur; but, before lending an ear to them, the works must first be studied, taking as a standpoint the most modest realities, examining what were Shakespeare's means and object, to what ends he wrote, and what æsthetic rules he intended to follow. Several facts are very important to consider.

Firstly, to write plays was for him a profession, or rather the complement and improvement of his profession of actor. Devoid of resources, but supple, ingenious,

¹ "Timber or Discoveries," written from 1620 to 1635 (?) according to Spingarn, "Critical Essays on the Seventeenth Century," Oxford, 1908, vol. i. p. 19.

practical, full of activity, he soon made his way ; starting as an actor's page or servant, he quickly became an actor himself, then an author ; he was the troupe's "factotum."

Without support, and not possessing the modest prestige of a university degree, what means had he then to get himself accepted and played, and thus secure a livelihood ? To succeed and please ; no other.—Please whom ? the handful of lords or gallants seated on the "very rushes" strewing the stage ? the Cambridge pedants ? the venerated shade of Aristotle ?—No, but the many : the English people swarming in the pit and the galleries, motley, noisy, stolid, plucky, delighting in shows exquisite or atrocious, freshly cut heads or freshly culled roses, triumphant conquests, lovely sentiments,¹ massacres, surprises, mystifications, successful ventures of all sorts, of warriors or lovers, of soldiers of fortune or tavern wits. Feats of arms or clever conceits, duels with the sword or with the tongue, all these gave to the crowd the delightful emotion of a sharp contest, and the pleasure would be complete if the glorious, the sentimental, the tragic, the witty, combined together, were moreover seasoned and spiced with rude jests borrowed from the neighbouring circuses and houses of ill fame ; the better liked if more highly flavoured. Shakespeare solicits no other judges than those, and follows no other rule but to please them.

He is practical. Something of his skill in managing his Stratford property is seen in the use he makes of his genius. Looking around him, he notes what veins of success might be profitably worked. If the series of his plays is examined, it will be found that he nearly always treats subjects already popular, to which attention had

¹ On these tendencies of the crowd from the Middle Ages, see above, vol. I. pp. 478 ff. and II. pp. 405 ff.

been called by a previous play, a fashionable novel, or a recent incident. These ready-made plots are rarely transformed by his genius, but generally left just as they were, with their improbabilities of old wives' tales, of winter's tales as he will say himself. Why alter them? His audiences were content, why be more critical than they? For the events as well as for the scenery, the spectator's imagination readily supplied what might be lacking, and passed by improbabilities without noticing them. Shakespeare knew this by experience, and he refers to it through the mouth of Theseus, duke of Athens: "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them."¹

Few dramatists have allowed less of their personality to appear in their works. What is mirrored in Shakespeare's plays, apart from all that is eternal in them, is his time and his public, much more than his own self. In dress as in thoughts, his Greeks, his Romans, his Italians, his Britons, his subjects of the early Plantagenets are all English men and women of the time of Elizabeth. Of the various kinds of exegetes, those who have tried to see, in each of his plays, the daily outcome and reflection of the events in his private life, are those who have gone most completely astray. All that can be said is that in his works, as in those of every writer, may be detected the general marks of youth at the beginning and those of age at the end; "Romeo" is a love hymn assuredly better suited to the author's early years, and the "Tempest" a calmer poem, better fitting his maturer period. More gaiety is noticeable in the plays written while he was reaching middle age, more gloom after. It would be difficult to go further than that, and it must even be observed that many thoughts are common to his first dramas and to his later ones; the poet's

¹ "Midsummer," v. 1.

mind was not without touches of melancholy when he began life, nor without juvenile grace when he neared the end. Some of Hamlet's most striking thoughts on death had already found expression on the lips of Richard II.

Nothing less surprising than this repetition of the same contrivances, the same situations, the same witticisms, the same figures of speech,¹ if one remembers the way Shakespeare wrote his plays and for what audiences. That which had succeeded once, would succeed again; an encounter which had thrilled the spectators would thrill them anew; a joke, a profound saying are soon forgotten, especially by a popular audience, and if, perchance, they are remembered it is all the better: the audience will catch the meaning more easily the second time than the first. Without speaking of mere verbal repetitions, of plays on the same words and other similar devices, the woman disguised as a page, the forest where every one meets, the characters taken for each other, the fallen great men

¹ Examples :

Thus give I mine, and thus I take thy heart,

[*They kiss.*]

—Give me my own again. (“Richard II.,” v. 1.)

Sin from my lips? . . .

Give me my sin again. (“Romeo,” i. 5.)

Or also :

Brief as the lightning in the collied night . . .

And ere a man hath power to say,—Behold!

The jaws of Darkness do devour it up. (“Midsummer,” i. 1.)

Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be

Ere one can say, It lightens. (“Romeo,” ii. 2.)

Repetitions of jests are innumerable. Of all the plays submitted to him Theseus selects the one that is “merry and tragical” (“Midsummer,” v. 1), and the clown in “Winter’s Tale” declares his preference for a ballad which offers “doleful matter merrily set downe” (iv. 4).

rendered crazy by misfortune, the madmen and mad women who stick straws and flowers in their hair¹ and use immodest language, the apparitions, the feigned deaths, the wife substituting herself for the mistress at a rendezvous with the husband,² the silly constables, the despairing princesses who roll shrieking on the ground, the friars both confessors and advisers, are to be met two, three, four times in Shakespeare's dramas. The more extraordinary, the oftener repeated: feigned death is five times employed to surprise the audience, and we have in Miranda's case something like a sixth attempt.³ Nothing could be more incomprehensible in the hypothesis of a poet, of an artist, aiming at a logical whole, desirous of encompassing in a regular course the complete sphere of human life. This complete sphere may be found, or very nearly, in Shakespeare's work, because of the immensity of his genius, but it is found in fragments; here a considerable part, there a small one that must be dug out from under ashes and rubbish; here, two or three fragments are duplicates of each other, there a blank remains. Shakespeare submitted to necessity: to his genius and to the crowd, both capricious, both giving marvellous or execrable advice, both moreover in intimate communication one with the other, as the flower holds to the earth, by its roots.

His grammar-school education was, to be sure, continued

¹ "Enter Lear fantastically dressed up with flowers,"—"Enter Ophelia, fantastically dressed with straws and flowers."

² Here we have proof positive that the repetition of the same contrivance was due to the success of the first experiment, for on the second occasion (in "Measure"), Shakespeare did not find it in his model, but he remembered having used it already, evidently to advantage (in "All's well").

³ In "Romeo," "Much Ado," "Winter's Tale," "Pericles," "Cymbeline." In "Tempest" the idea is not so thoroughly carried out; Miranda is only declared by her father to be dead, and she is a moment after shown with Ferdinand playing at chess.

to some extent, through his reading. But neither had he, like Jonson, the temper of a scholar, nor did opportunities offer for him to become one. A scholar would be careful about his facts, his dates, his geography, versed in things and works of the past, fond of books. Shakespeare was nothing of the sort; he was something infinitely better, but this did not include that.

He does not seem ever to have had any particular fondness for books, nor to have spent much of his money, when he became rich, in forming a library. The opposite of his friend Jonson, who, in spite of his penuriousness, was constantly purchasing books, and when he had had to "devour," that is to sell, his library "for necessity,"¹ began at once to form another, the great dramatist never apparently possessed but a scant collection. When the physician John Hall, Shakespeare's son-in-law, had his last will drawn, he made a special mention of his books: "Item concerning my study of bookes, I leave them . . . to . . . my sonn Nash."² When the French dramatist, Shakespeare's contemporary, Robert Garnier, died, he bequeathed to the *Sieur de Baugé* "*son bassin et deux sallières aussi d'argent, ensemble ses livres et sa bibliothèque.*"³ Shakespeare mentions in his will his sword, his "wearing apparell," his "broad silver gilt bole," his "plate, jewels, and household stuffe whatsoever"; but as to books there is not a word.

Judging from the plot of his plays and the allusions in them, he must have possessed, or been able to consult,

¹ "Conversations with Drummond," Shakespeare Soc. 1842, p. 22.

² Stratford-on-Avon, November 20, 1635; Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," ii. p. 61. And the same Hall is the one member of the family (not the one posterity would have chosen) to mention in his will not only his books but his "manuscripts," of which he speaks, it must be said, in very modest fashion, bequeathing them to his same son [in-law] Nash: "Burne them or doe with them what yow please." Cf. below, p. 269.

³ Le Mans, September 13, 1590. H. Chardon, "R. Garnier," 1905, p. 178.

the works of Holinshed and a few other English chroniclers, Foxe's "Actes and Monuments," North's Plutarch, various collections of tales, and in particular those of Paynter, Riche, and Belleforest (the latter in French); the novels of Lyly, Lodge, and Greene; Sidney's "Arcadia," Underdowne's translation of "Theagenes and Chariclea," a few of those great romances that turned Don Quixote's brain, especially "Amadis" and the "Knight of the Sun"; Montemayor's "Diana," Ovid's "Metamorphoses," translated by Golding, probably also a Latin Ovid and a few other classics in the original or in translations; Alciat's then famous "Emblems,"¹ a Montaigne,² an Ariosto, a Rabelais (in English probably all three),³ Saviolo's "Practice" of fencing,⁴ several books of travels, and in particular Hakluyt's; some jest books, which were not allowed to lie idle on his table;⁵ a number of

¹ D. in 1550; "Emblematum Libellus," three times translated into French in the sixteenth century. H. Green's views on "Shakespeare and the Emblem writers," 1870, are extremely exaggerated. On Caxton's influence as propagator of aphorisms borrowed from the ancients, see Brandl, in the *Furnivall Miscellany*, p. 16. Cf. Anders, "Shakespeare's Books," Berlin, 1904, pp. 81, 117.

² Gonzalo's description of his ideal republic, in the "Tempest," ii. 1, is borrowed from Florio's translation of Montaigne, 1603, book i. ch. 30. See "Montaigne and Shakespeare," by J. M. Robertson, London, 1897; brilliantly defended but excessive propositions, leading to such unacceptable conclusions as these: "The Essays are the source of the greatest expansive movement of the poet's mind."

³ "You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first," "As you like it," iii. 2. On "Gargantua" in English, in 1594 and before, see "R. Laneham's Letter," ed. Furnivall, 1887, p. 50. Cf. the character of the pedantic schoolmaster Holophernes in "Love's Labour's Lost," and Rabelais' Gargantua being taught by "ung grand docteur sophiste nommé maistre Tubal Holoferne"; "Gargantua," book i. ch. 14.

⁴ "Saviolo his Practise . . . intreating of the use of the Rapier and Dagger, of honour and honourable Quarrels," 1595. Touchstone borrows from it in "As you like it," v. 4.

⁵ Especially "A C. mery Talys," 1st ed. early sixteenth century, 1st dated one 1526, ed. Hazlitt, 1887; "Wits, Fits, and Fancies," 1595; the "Book of Riddles," which Slender regrets not to have about him ("Merry Wives," i. 1), and which had been one of the possessions of Captain Cox, 1575 ("Laneham's

ballads, "with mine own picture on the top of it," says Falstaff; ¹ various books of poetry: the "*Faerie Queene*," the "*Passionate Pilgrime*," attributed to himself and which he quotes, Tottel's "*Miscellany*" turned to account by the grave-diggers in "*Hamlet*" and possessed by Slender, Sidney's sonnets, quoted by Falstaff, Marlowe's "*Hero*;" but especially a number of plays, by Whetstone, Greene, Lyly, Marlowe, Peele, Chettle, Dekker, etc., several anonymous ones, several old and ridiculous dramatic sketches, to be used as subjects for new plays or subjects for fun, moralities with their Vice, "*Life of Cambises*" with its ranting speeches: work-tools most of these, rather than volumes for a book-lover's library. There is no sign that he took any interest in the old literature of his country. He never read Langland, whose admirable "*Visions*," printed four times between 1550 and 1561, praised by Meres, Gascoigne, and all the critics of the period, would have supplied him with so many useful hints for his "*Richard II.*" It does not seem that he knew Chaucer much better, his ignorance of the old master's "*Troilus*" being his best excuse for the crudity of his own.² His biblical allusions are numerous, but commonplace, most of them, and they do not denote any exceptional knowledge of the Scriptures.

That he knew Italian is very doubtful, that he knew

Letter," ed. Furnivall, p. 30), probably the same as the "*Book of mery Riddles*," of which, however, no edition earlier than 1600 is now known. Ben Jonson scornfully spoke of those who borrowed their plots or their jests; Shakespeare never scrupled to borrow either, though he makes Beatrice sneer at those who suppose her wit to be "from the Hundred merry tales." Mrs. Quickly's words "to comfort" dying Falstaff are drawn from "*Wits, Fits, and Fancies*" (Malone).

¹ "2 Henry IV.," iv. 3.

² We know for certain that there was a previous play by Chettle and Dekker on the same subject, and this was most probably Shakespeare's source. An allusion to the "*House of Fame*" is in "*Titus Andronicus*," but the play (below, p. 184) was only remodelled by Shakespeare.

French is certain. French was then the most useful tool in a literary workshop ; it opened all other literatures. Shakespeare's familiarity with it is proved not merely by the scenes in which, by a trick then very common, he uses that tongue to make his public laugh (scenes between Pistol and the French soldier, Henry V. and Katharine of France, Dr. Caius and Mrs. Quickly), but by reason of some incidental remarks, showing an appreciation of even the subtleties of the idiom ; for example, in the scene where the Duchess of York craves the royal pardon for her son, while the duke tries to dissuade the king :

Duchess. No word like pardon for kings mouths so meet.

York. Speak it in French, king ; say *pardonnez moy*.

Duchess. Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy ?¹

To use, or even (if borrowed) to understand, such a play on words, one must be truly familiar with the language.

Shakespeare's knowledge of the Latin and Greek classics has exercised, more than anything else, modern critics' ingenuity. Some there be who want, in order to admire him at their ease, a Shakespeare made after their own image. With such critics, idolatry begins at home ; they too would, for a little, exclaim :

Ah ! pour l'amour du grec, souffrez qu'on vous embrasse.

They kill the great man with kindness.

On what remained in Shakespeare's mind of the time spent by him, between his seventh and his fourteenth or fifteenth year (the most probable dates), at the Stratford grammar school,² and on what he may have privately learnt

¹ "Richard II.," v. 3.

² The most sensible essay on this question seems that of Baynes ("What Shakespeare learnt at school," in his "Shakespearian Studies," 1894), whose conclusions are not far removed from Jonson's well-known statement.

afterwards by reading, we have the aforesaid testimony of Jonson, who knew him well, a testimony contradicted by no other and corroborated by each of the few that have come down to us: Plautus "was an exact comœdian, yet never any scholar, as our Shake-speare, if alive, would confesse himself," wrote Fuller in his "Worthies," printed in 1662, but at which he was working as early as 1643; and he continues, saying: Shakespeare "was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit, sed nascitur*. . . . Indeed his learning was very little."—"I have heard y Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit without any art at all," wrote the Rev. J. Ward, vicar of Stratford, in his memoranda-book in 1662.¹

Some modern exegetes have none the less made of Shakespeare a scholar imbued with Greek and Latin literature, his very style being studded with hellenisms, and his mind being so full of Euripides as to seek inspiration even from the fragments of his lost plays. Two Greek tragedies are alleged to have supplied him with hints and "archetypes" when he wrote "Lear," and four when he wrote "Macbeth."² This is really killing the great man with kindness, or if not killing, laming. He can no longer walk, but must have crutches, something or somebody to lean upon, even when the ground is easy and the road smooth.

What is most probable is that Shakespeare was neither the perfect ignoramus that some have wanted him to be, nor the deep scholar imagined by others, the Latinist who could revel in reading the classics, and scorn the use of a translation. The proofs given of his profound knowledge (the utmost being made of early plays, which he only remodelled, and in which no one knows now

¹ "Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse," New Shakespeare Soc., pp. 246, 327.

² J. Churton Collins, "Studies in Shakespeare," 1904, pp. 72 ff.

what is really his)¹ fall usually under two heads: he shows an acquaintance with classic authors of whom there were no translations, and passages in his plays recall others in the works of Latin or Greek writers, passages so numerous that it cannot be a question of mere coincidences.

Such proofs turn out to be absolutely nugatory. Concerning translations, it must be noted, first, that some of the works usually said not to have been translated in his day, certainly had been: such is the case with the "*Menæchmi*" of Plautus² and Ovid's "*Amores*";³ second, that many classics, not translated into English, were easily accessible in French, a side of the question well worthy of an attention which it has not yet received: such were,

¹ Especially "*Henry VI.*" and "*Titus Andronicus*," the very number of quotations and classical allusions in these plays being so abnormal as to be in reality one more proof, added to others, that they were only remodelled by Shakespeare.

² Imitated in the "*Comedy of Errors*," acted about 1589-91: it had been translated into English by W. W[arner?], licensed for publication on June 10, 1594 (Arber's "*Transcript*," ii. p. 653), and issued in 1595: "*Menæchmi*. Apleasant . . . comedie, taken out of . . . Plautus. Chosen purposely from out the rest as least harmefull, and yet most delightfull." The preface expressly states that the translation had previously circulated in MS. for the delight of the author's "private friends." It may be added that no argument founded on the resemblances between "*Menæchmi*" and "*Errors*" can convey any certainty, because there was a previous play called a "*Historie of Error*" acted before Elizabeth in 1577 (below p. 185, n. 3), and no one can tell how much Shakespeare derived from it. All we know is that, when he had an older play to resort to, he rarely looked for other sources.

³ Much has been made of Shakespeare having chosen the epigraph for his "*Venus*" ("*Vilia miretur vulgus*," etc.) from the "*Amores*," "not yet translated into English" (Rouse, "*Shakespeare's Ovid*," p. 1). Little enough should be made of it, as there existed a translation, in MS. it is true, but the work of one whom Shakespeare knew personally, the only contemporary poet whom he affectionately praises and quotes, Christopher Marlowe. The lines used as a motto by Shakespeare read thus in Marlowe's translation:

Let base conceited wits admire vile things,
Fair Phœbus lead me to the Muses springs.

for example, the "Odes" of Horace;¹ third, we have but a faint idea of what was or was not in print in Elizabethan London; all we know for certain is that a mass of works were then written, printed, and sold, of which nothing survives. According to Arber, the Stationers' Registers "do not record, at the utmost, more than one half" of the literature of the period, and "we must by no means be surprised if works should turn up of which at present we have no knowledge whatever."² There is no doubt either that many writings circulated in manuscript which were printed only later or not at all.³ So that he must be a very bold critic who, because no translation can now be pointed out, concludes that Shakespeare must needs have read the original. The poet may have read it, or he may not, we do not know; he

¹ "In Shakespeare's time there was no translation of the 'Odes,' and yet his plays abound in what certainly appear to be reminiscences of them" (Churton Collins, "Studies in Shakespeare," 1904, p. 26). There were at least two French translations, with the Latin text on the opposite page: "Les Œuvres de Q. Horace Flacce . . . mises en françois, partie traduites, partie . . . corrigées de nouveau par M. Luc de la Porte," Paris, 1584, 12mo; "Les Œuvres de Q. Horace Flacce, latin et françois, de la traduction de Robert et Anthoine le Chevalier d'Agneaux, frères," Paris, 1588:

Mécène, qui prens ta naissance
De Roys aïeux, O ma défense,
Mon honneur et ornement doux :
Les uns se plaisent (etc.).

² "Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers," 1875, ff., vol. ii. p. 24.

³ In the preface to his "Brazen Age," Thomas Heywood, born ab. 1575, complains that a certain pedant had appropriated and given as his own a translation of Ovid: "his three books *De Arte Amandi* and two *De Remedio Amoris*," while in reality, says the dramatist, "they were things which out of my juniority and want of judgment I committed to the view of some private friends, but with no purpose of publishing" ("Works," Pearson, 1873, vol. iii. p. 167). The custom of showing works in MS. to one's "private friends," that is, in fact, to any one who cared, was then a well-established one, and was followed, as Meres tells us, by Shakespeare himself for his sonnets: well might those to whom Shakespeare showed his sonnets show him their translations.

probably followed the course which gave him least trouble ; in any case, the lack of an English translation known to us can in no way settle the question.

As for resemblances, numerous or striking as they may be (they are usually much less striking than we are told), it would be easy to parallel them from any literature, and prove thus that Shakespeare delighted in reading Chinese philosophers, Hindu dramatists, and Persian poets. When we hear that John of Gaunt's playing on his name is likely to be imitated from Ajax doing the same in Sophocles's tragedy, we are tempted to suggest that much more likely the funny scene between Pistol and the French soldier at the battle of Agincourt is imitated from the no less funny scene between the Greek soldier and his Phrygian prisoner after the battle of Salamis, in "The Persians," by Timothy of Milet, fourth century B.C. There is only one difficulty in this latter very excellent case, and that is that Timothy's work has just been discovered in a sarcophagus at Abousir, Egypt, the Busiris of the ancients.¹

On such similitudes, more than one author of note, examining his own conscience, has made statements worth remembering. Sir Thomas Browne, eleven years a contemporary of Shakespeare, speaking from personal experience, wrote : "Some conceits and expressions are common unto divers authors of different countries and ages. . . . In a piece of mine published long ago, the learned annotator hath paralleled many passages with others in Montaigne's essays, whereas, to deal clearly, when I penned that piece, I had never read these lines in that author, and scarce any more ever since."

On such similitudes, I thought it might be of interest to try an experiment ; and availing myself of the kindness and friendship of the greatest French poet then alive, I

¹ "Tuimothéos, Die Perser, aus einem Papyrus von Abusir," ed. U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, Leipzig, 1903.

chose in his works passages offering striking resemblances with others in old writers, and I asked him if these were cases of imitation, recollection, or re-invention; such passages as these :

. . . Je suis, par fatale ordonnance,
Son amant destiné, je n'avoy la puissance
De la prendre ou laisser, rejetter ou choisir.

(Jacques Grévin.)

Mais l'amante que j'ai, je ne l'ai pas choisie,
Je ne pourrais pas plus la changer que ma sœur.'

(Sully Prudhomme.)

When time shall turn those amber locks to grey,
My verse again shall gild and make them gay,
And trick them up in knotted curls anew,
And to thy autumn give a summer's hue.

(Drayton.)

J'attends, moi, sa vieillesse et j'en épîrai l'heure,
Et ce sera mon tour; alors je lui dirai :
'Je vous chéris toujours et toujours je vous pleure,
Reprenez un dépôt que je gardais sacré.
Je viens vous rapporter votre jeunesse blonde;
Tout l'or de vos cheveux est resté dans mon cœur.

(Sully Prudhomme.)

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible she
That shall command my heart and me;
Where'er she lie,
Lock'd up from mortall eye,
In the shady leaves of Destiny. . . .

(Crashaw.)

L'épouse, la compagne à mon cœur destinée,
Promise a mon jeune tourment,
Je ne la connais pas, mais je sais qu'elle est née,
Elle respire en ce moment.

(Sully Prudhomme.)

To my inquiries the poet answered that he had never read any of these hypothetical models when he wrote. "I console myself for my early ignorance," he went on to

say, "by the thought that if I had known, before I rimed, all that has been written on love, the pen would have fallen from my hands; I would have recognised in others my own emotions, and even in their lives circumstances analogous to those which had aroused them in mine. I confess, to my shame, that I was too ignorant to be a plagiarist." He adds that the true originality in a poet "consists less in what he says than in the inalienable and quite personal timbre of his voice, his accent, and the movement that his passion gives to his song." Except perhaps in the narrative parts of his works, or occasionally in the strangeness of his ways of feeling, a poet "offers nothing new to his readers and does not pretend to do so; he procures them only the satisfaction of recognising themselves. The human heart is the common means of communication turned to account by poetry; it offers in all poets the same gamut of sentiments, but with a different ring."¹

This ring, this true originality, was preeminently Shakespeare's; by this he was to rise and make his voice heard above all others, and his words were to become unforgettable dicta. Many of his sayings, even the most famous, are to be found, in essence, almost anywhere, in works sometimes within and sometimes beyond his reach: Hamlet's meditations in Seneca, and also in Du Plessis-Mornay, and elsewhere too²; King Henry IV.'s musings on sleep

¹ Chatenay, Seine, November 18, 1904. See the complete text at the end of the volume.

² Chorus of act iii. of "Troas," translated by Jasper Heywood, 1559; above, p. 26. "Je vous prie, qu'est ce qu'estre mort, sinon n'estre plus vivant en ce monde? Avons nous donc senti quelque douleur lorsque nous n'y étions encores point? . . . Sommes nous jamais plus semblables à un mort que quand nous dormons, ne plus en repos qu'à ceste heure là?"—"Excellent discours de la vie et de la mort, par Philippe de Mornay, gentil-homme françois," 1576, 8vo, p. 56, dedicated to his sister, December 29, 1575. It had been translated by Mary Countess of Pembroke: "A Discourse of Life and Death . . . by Ph. Mornay," 1592.

in the same Du Plessis-Mornay,¹ Romeo's love-making in Marot,² Hotspur's taunts in Luigi Groto,³ and so on *ad infinitum*. All those thoughts had occurred to others before, but Shakespeare created them anew; they received from him their definitive birth.

With all this, book-learning had little enough to do. It was not his fashion to take unnecessary pains, to verify facts and dates, to study difficult old texts, and go to sources, were they English or Latin. He took the first thing that came, the publication nearest his hand, the one easiest to get and understand, the "Troublesome Raigne of John

¹ "Ils (the great) ont leurs lits bien mols et bien parez, on orroit quand ils veulent dormir trotter une souris par leur chambre, une mouche ne s'approcheroit pas de leur visage. Et toutefois, alors que le paisan s'endort au murmure d'un ruisseau, au bruit d'un marché n'ayant autre lit que la terre, ni autre couverture que le ciel, ceux-ci parmi tout ce silence et toute cette délicatesse ne font que se retourner . . . leur repos mesme n'a point de repos." —Du Plessis-Mornay, *ibid.* p. 33. Cf. "2 Henry IV.," iii. 1; below, p. 338.

² *Romeo*. Give me my sin again.

Marot. : Je suis icy
En bon vouloir de vous le rendre.
(“Le Baiser volé.”)

Hamlet's love-letter to Ophelia: "Doubt thou the stars are fire," recalls, *e.g.*, de Pontoux's sonnet cvi:

Plustost ardra ceste machine ronde . . .
Plustost iront les eaux encontre mont,
Plustost cherra d'Olympe le grand mont
Que vostre amour de mon cœur se départe.
(“L'Idée,” 1579.)

³ One of the finds of Mr. P. A. Daniel. The passage occurs in “La Calisto, nova favola pastorale di Luigi Groto” (“nuovamente stampata,” Venice, 1586, dedication dated 1580, first played 1561, “ma poi è stata riformata dall'Auttore”). Febo, “in forma di pastore,” vaunts his own power as a sorcerer. He can:

Da gli antichi sepolchri chiamar le anime.
Melio Capraio. Ben il chiamarle sarà cosa facile,
Il caso sia che vogliano rispondere (iii. 3).

Cf. Hotspur and Glendower, “1 Henry IV.,” iii. 1.

King of England" rather than "Ajax"; but he transformed by his very touch what he used, reaching or surpassing, in his sudden flights, the sublimity of the Latin and Greek masterpieces unawares, and he did not care any more to methodically form, educate, and perfect his genius than he troubled about leaving to posterity correct texts of the product of the same.

Writing especially for the multitude, it is with the multitude that Shakespeare especially succeeded. The applause of the crowd apprised the court of his merit and gave the Queen and the great the curiosity to see, amongst many others, some few of his plays. And although he won, little by little, admirers of all kinds the bulk of his partisans continued to be the frequenters of the pit. The refined could not ignore the true poet he was; but they saw more willingly in him the amourist, the author of "Venus," of "Lucrece," of "sugred" lines; it is usually as the sweet, the mellifluous, the honey-tongued Shakespeare that he figures in contemporary criticism; less is said of the sombre, the tragic Shakespeare.¹ It even happens that men of instruction make fun openly of this "sweet writer," as at Cambridge in 1600, where his praise was spoken, as we have seen, in the "Returne from Parnassus," by ridiculous Gullio, who swears only by Shakespeare: "Let this duncified world esteeme of Spenser and Chaucer, I'le worshipp sweet Mr. Shakespeare."² Poets are found enumerating the literary glories

¹ Examples: "Sweet Shakespeare," in "Polimanteia," anonymous, 1595; praise of his "honey-flowing vaine," Barnfield, 1598; "Mellifluous and hony-tongued Shakespeare," Meres, 1598; "Honie-tong'd Shakespeare," "sugred tongues" of the characters in his plays, Weever, 1599, etc. In the seventeenth century he is still often similarly qualified: "Mellifluous Shakespeare," Th. Heywood, 1635; "Thy Muses sugred dainties," Bancroft, 1639; "Shakespeare's gentler Muse," Denham, 1647; "Shakespeare's lighter sound," Cartwright, 1647; "Sweet Shakespeare," Crowne, 1681.

² In order not to be taxed with injustice, the author places, beside the dithyrambs of silly Gullio and the interested praise he attributes to Kemp (held

of the period, at a time when Shakespeare had given all his masterpieces, and omitting him. Wither, in 1613, says how much he would like to know the illustrious singers of his country and of his day—Daniel, Drayton, Jonson, Chapman, Sylvester—but does not mention Shakespeare.¹ Another poet speaks, for once, of Shakespeare the tragic writer, Shakespeare the author of “Hamlet,” but it is only to oppose, good-humouredly, and as though recording a self-evident fact, the high literary art of a Sidney to the more popular and vulgar product of the dramatist’s pen: a preface, says Scoloker, should be, in a way, like the “never-too-well-read *Arcadia*,” or, “to come home to the vulgar’s element, like friendly Shake-speare’s tragedies . . . faith it should please all, like Prince Hamlet.”² Webster enumerates his models in dramatic art: these are first and foremost, in one group, Chapman, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher; “and lastly (without wrong

up by him as an ass), his own serious verdict on Shakespeare; he formulates it thus, mentioning nothing save his poems and their “sweeter verse”:

Who loves not Adon’s love or Lucrece rape?
His sweeter verse contaynes hart throbbing line,
Could but a graver subject him content,
Without love’s foolish lazy languishment.

“The Pilgrimage to Parnassus,” ed. Macray, Oxford, 1886, 8vo, part 1st of the “Returne,” pp. 63 and 87.

¹ “Abuses stript and whipt.” Cf. below, concerning Browne, 1616, and Herrick, 1648, pp. 353, 354.

² In his epistle to the reader Scoloker jocosely enumerates the qualities indispensable to a preface: “In the general or foundation [it] must be like Paul’s church, resolved to let every knight and gull travel upon [it]. . . . It must have teeth like a satyr, eyes like a critic. . . . It should be like the never-too-well-read ‘*Arcadia*,’ where the prose and verse, matter and words, are like his mistress’s eyes! one still excelling another, and without corival! or to come home to the vulgar’s element, like friendly Shake-speare’s tragedies, where the comedian rides and the tragedian stands on tiptoe. Faith it should please all, like Prince Hamlet!”—“Daiphantus or the Passions of Love, comical to read but tragical to act . . . by An. Sc.” London, 1604, “English Garner; Longer Poems,” Bullen, 1903, p. 367.

last to be named) the right happy and copious industry of Master Shakespeare, Master Dekker, and Master Heywood"¹—without wrong, to be sure, especially for the two last.

Shakespeare, moreover, treated his own plays with an indifference which might make people believe that he was at one, concerning them, with the most disdainful critics. He justified, in a way, the higher esteem in which were held his poems on antique subjects: he himself gave correct, carefully revised texts, preceded by fine dedications to a noble patron, and adorned with a haughty epigraph from Ovid in which he ventured for once to speak his mind to the vulgar: "*Vilia, miretur vulgus*"! But he never printed any of his plays; handed over to the actors, learnt, performed, and paid for, they had, in his eyes, fulfilled their function; he busied himself with writing others, and thought no more about the old ones. As far as can be seen, he never dreamt of immortality, especially not as a dramatist; he did not even show the slightest desire to secure a public of readers besides his public of spectators. The only trace of his having possibly had anything to do with the printing of his plays is to be found in a *prohibition* to print "As you like it," and one or two others of his dramas. Outside of this case, in which the troupe, as a body, took action rather than he personally, there is nothing but absolute indifference. He had written quickly, without pains, without erasures, merely listening to what was being whispered in his ear by an incomparable genius, plays destined to delight the world: he let them, their series of performances over, go and must in the actors' *tire-room*, get lost, fall into the hands of literary pirates, become whatever it might please chance. Pirates published, under his very eyes, texts of his dramas, sometimes correct, sometimes

¹ Preface to the "White Divel," 1612.

made up anyhow, out of fragments borrowed or stolen from the players, completed by means of gross inventions or of notes taken during the performance.¹ Thus disguised, absolutely unrecognisable, some portions being incomprehensible and others ridiculous, the play would appear with Shakespeare's name tied to one of those advertisement-titles invented by the publisher—"long-tayled" titles said indignant Nash.² Title, text, enforced publication, all that, on the contrary, seemed to Shakespeare of no importance. He never said a word, never protested, never gave the real text. Quiet, free from care, having retired to Stratford at the close of his career, he passed there several happy years as a wealthy and respected citizen: it never occurred to him to employ his leisure in preparing an edition of his plays. Others, like his great rival and friend Ben Jonson, might give him a different example; he felt not the slightest temptation to imitate them. Out of

¹ By stenography; the word existed as well as the thing, and there were manuals to teach the art: "A book called 'The Art of Stenographie'" (by J. Willis), is entered in the "Stationers' Registers," April 19, 1602; (Arber, iii. 204) pr. same year, 14th ed., 1647. Thomas Heywood says that his play, "If you know not me" (1st ed., 1605), had succeeded:

So much, that some by stenography drew
The plot, put it in print (scarce one word true).

² Addressing the printer, he says, in the preface to the 2nd ed. of "*Pierce Pennilesse*," 1592: "Now this is that I woulde have you to do in this second edition. First cut off that long-tayled title, and let mee not in the forfront of my booke, make a tedious mountebanks oration to the reader." The title of the 1st ed. (also of 1592) stated, in fact, that the work was "pleasantly interlac'd with variable delights; and pathetically intermixt with conceived reprooves," etc. The same with several of Shakespeare's plays; the "*Merry Wives*," for example, came out with a long-tailed title assuring the reader that the play was "entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors . . . with the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll," etc., etc., 1602. And while the title was lengthened, the play was shortened, the publisher giving but a mere sketch of it, reprinted in 1619 (and by the Shakesp. Soc. 1842). Pirates were not very particular; in that same title the parson is turned into a knight and figures under the name of "Syr Hugh the Welch Knight."

thirty-seven plays which he had written, twenty-one remained in manuscript at his death, mixed with the theatre properties, in the actors' chests, and in great danger of disappearing.

Never did indifference in a man of genius go farther. Molière did not publish his plays either, at first: "It seemed to me," he said, "that the success they had had on being performed was enough for me to need no more." But when he saw himself threatened with a spurious edition of the "*Précieuses*," he gave out the real text. The genius who could create "*Othello*" and "*Macbeth*" never troubled himself to preserve them for a posterity about which he felt no concern; and it is a singular thing to see the same man risk the loss of those master-pieces, and display an ever alert energy to secure payment for his farm produce, and to recover a debt, suing John Clayton, of Stratford, who owed him seven pounds, Philip Rogers, who was behindhand in paying him his malt and in reimbursing a loan of two shillings, "*duos solidos legalis monete*," John Addenbroke, another fellow townsman who owed him six pounds, and who, summoned before the jury, left the place ("*non est inventus in balliva*"), but the procedure was carried on vigorously against his bail. Excepting his sonnets, which he published no more than his plays, and in which he talks of immortality, as did all the amourist poets of the period, the only document in which we see him concerning himself about a distant future, is his will; but it is only to specify, in great detail, that his lands and houses are to be handed down to his descendants, according to primogeniture, "*for ever*." When this winged genius touched the earth, he trod it with soles of lead.

III.

But a winged genius he was, and the frequenters of his theatre were soon to become aware of it. Truth to say, tokens of greatness were scant enough in his earliest attempts; the young man keeps, at first, to the beaten track, and does not trust himself out of the common roads leading to success: massacres, surprises, wit-combats, clowneries, appeals to patriotism, etc. Later on he will retain all these indispensable factors, but will add marvellous touches of genius, having noticed that they did no harm, were even of use sometimes, and above all being unable to refrain from using them.

At the time he was entering on his career, Greene and Marlowe ruled the stage; he adopted with alacrity their methods, dared to remodel some of Greene's dramas, to the latter's violent indignation, borrowed from Marlowe his sombre vein, and in his first attempt surpassed the horrors of "Tamburlaine" by the atrocities of "Titus Andronicus."¹ Nothing there but hands cut off, tongues plucked out, heads chopped off, pits into which the innocent are thrown alive by the traitor, pell-mell with corpses, a murdered woman whose assassin jocosely imitates on the stage the cries of a stuck pig—

Weke, weke!—so cries a pig prepared to the spit—

¹ Probably an old play, merely remodelled by Shakespeare, though the partisans of a very learned Shakespeare insist that it must be entirely his own, the prodigious number of quotations and classical allusions in it suiting excellently their views. It was performed ab. 1588, entered 1594, printed same year, mentioned by Meres 1598 as one of the 12 plays already written by Shakespeare, printed again 1600, 1611, and included in the first folio, 1623. The unique copy of the 1594 ed. was discovered in Sweden in 1905: "The most lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus . . . London, printed by John Danter." On the problem of authorship, see *e.g.* Schroer, "Ueber 'Titus Andronicus,'" 1891; Robertson, "Did Shakespeare write 'Titus Andronicus'?" 1905; Greg, "Henslowe's Diary," ii. 159.

throats cut and blood flowing into a basin, under our eyes. A villain of deepest hue, fertile in gruesome inventions, unearths the dead and stands their bodies at the doors of his best friends: Marlowe's Barabas will imagine nothing better, although he too understands the propping up of corpses on their feet, a frequent sight on the stage in those days. As a set-off, some gentle mourning thoughts on the death of a fly: "How if that fly had a father and a mother?" So speaks Titus Andronicus himself, a first sketch of a tragedy hero whose mind has been unbalanced by grief.¹

The elements of success in the comedies written during those early years are quite as rudimentary: use of ready-made classical types, the pedant, the braggart, the silly clown; of old-fashioned "disputoisons," wit-combats and punning contests, in "Love's Labour's Lost";² complications, mistakes, and surprises in the "Comedy of Errors,"³

¹ *Titus*. How now! has sorrow make thee dote already?

Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I. . . .

Marcus. Alas, poor man! grief has so wrought on him

He takes false shadows for true substances (iii. 2).

² "Love's Labour's Lost," performed about 1588-9 (Furnivall), 1590 (Dowden), 1591 (Lee), 1st ed. 1598: "A pleasant conceited Comedie called Loves labors lost. As it was presented before her Highnes this last Christmas. Newly corrected and augmented By W. Shakespeare." An allusion in "Alba, the Months Minde of a melancholy Lover . . . by R[obert] T[ofte]," 1598, shows the play's popularity (effect of the performance on two lovers—same device as in Fromentin's "Dominique": scene at the performance of the "Huguenots"):

Loves Labour Lost, I once did see a Play

Y-cleped so, so called to my paine. . . .

³ "The Comedy of Errors," performed about 1589-91, printed for the first time in the folio of 1623, founded on the "Menæchmi" of Plautus, and probably also on a lost old play, "The Historie of Error," acted in January, 1577, before the Queen, at Hampton Court (Feuillerat, "Documents relating to the Revels," 1908, p. 256). A number of allusions show the popularity of Shakespeare's comedy. It was performed on Innocents' Day, December 28, 1594, in Gray's Inn Hall (and again in the same hall on December 6, 1895).

where Plautus's twin brothers—too simple an invention—are duplicated by twin servants: a device through which were increased both the unlikeliness and the success of the play.

From this time, Shakespeare begins also to make the best of the facilities offered to men of his profession by his audience's patriotism and keen interest in the national past. He sets his hand to the three parts of "Henry VI.,"¹ a group of old, much applauded plays, which he remodels, adding poetical touches, giving a fuller development to striking passages,² but without suppressing quantities of

¹ The three parts respectively performed ab. 1591, 1592, 1593; no ed. before the folio of 1623. The three were founded on old plays; the one corresponding to Part I. is lost, being possibly that one originally written by Greene, which occasioned his vituperative remarks on Shakespeare's free borrowings, and was alluded to by Nash in his "Pierce Penilesse," 1592 (above, p. 120). The second and third parts are both founded on texts which we still possess, viz., "The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, with the death of the good Duke Humphrey and . . . the death of the Duke of Suffolke . . . with the notable Rebellion of Jack Cade," 1st ed. 1594; "The true tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke . . . with the whole contention betweene the two houses of Lancaster and Yorke," 1st ed. 1595; considerable portions of the original are left untouched by Shakespeare.

² In the "First Part of the Contention," for example, the Duchess of Gloster says:

Why droopes my Lord like over-ripened corne,
Hanging the head at Cearies plenteous load?
What seest thou Duke Humphrey King Henries crowne?
Reach at it, and if thine arme be too short,
Mine shall lengthen it. Art not thou a Prince?
Unckle to the King, and his Protector?
Then what shouldst thou lacke that might content thy minde?

Shakespeare develops and strengthens the passage, as if an early vision of his future Lady Macbeth had offered itself to his view:

Why droops my lord, like over-ripen'd corn,
Hanging the head at Ceres' plenteous load?
Why doth the great Duke Humphrey knit his brows,
As frowning at the favours of the world?

blemishes which his hearers would have missed : shows and events impossible to adequately represent, corpses strewing the boards, bleeding heads, just cut off, brought forth scene after scene, patriotic bombast carried to an incredible degree, the adversary vilified, blackened, ridiculed, his princes the basest cowards, quaking with fear at the sight of a single English soldier and running away in their shirt across the stage, France's heroine, "Jeanne la bonne Lorraine," turned into a prostitute, a hag, an "ugly witch," who is with child by Alençon—"that notorious Machiavel," says York, who apparently possessed some advance copy of the "Prince"—or by others, and who trembles at the prospect of death.

Times have changed ; mankind has progressed ; by no audience to-day would such baseness be held as greatness ; not one that would not take seriously the burden of the Dauphin's ridiculous speech, intended then to cause laughter :

But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.

In "Richard II.," "Richard III.," and "King John," also historical plays, on very popular subjects, the improvement is considerable. No longer Greene's, but Marlowe's influence is now discernible. From time to time luminous flashes of genius traverse the darkness. But there is still a great deal of darkness ; the plays are ill-contrived, in-

Why are thine eyes fix'd to the sullen earth,
Gazing on that which seems to dim thy sight ?
What seest thou there ? King Henry's diadem,
Enchas'd with all the honours of the world ? .
Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold :—
What, is't too short ? I'll lengthen it with mine :
And having both together heav'd it up,
We'll both together lift our heads to heaven ;
And never more abase our sight so low,
As to vouchsafe one glance unto the ground.
(" 2 Hen. VI.," i. 2.)

coherent, full of contradictions, of scenes succeeding each other in arbitrary fashion like the slides of a magic-lantern. One wonders, at moments, if the showman has not mistaken his slides and used some of them in the wrong order. Samuel Johnson thought that he had, and proposed changes: the fourth scene of the second act in "Richard II." should, according to him, become the second of the third act. It is hard for the modern reader of that play¹ to be interested in any of the characters, but the contemporary spectator felt with them all, because the events were lugubrious and belonged to English history. From the Middle Ages down to the days of Shakespeare, the "Falls of Princes" and "Mirrors for Magistrates" had been popular, and Richard II.'s downfall was one of the classical themes for harrowing tales, nowhere more harrowing than in Shakespeare's drama: heart-rending, to be sure, but, for the men of to-day at least, not heart-winning.

In "Richard III."² corpses are brought once more

¹ Performed ab. 1593-4, 1st ed. (without the deposition scene) 1597: "The Tragedie of King Richard the Second. As it hath beene publicly acted by the right Honourable the Lorde Chamberlaine his Servants"; other separate editions, 1598, 1608 (the first having the deposition scene), 1615, 1634. Source, Holinshed's chronicle and probably an old play on the same subject, a very popular one and already treated several times. See Boas, "A Pre-Shakespearean Richard II.," *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1902.

² Performed ab. 1594, 1st ed. 1597: "The Tragedy of King Richard the third, containing His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittiefull murther of his innocent nephewes: with the whole course of his detested life and most deserved death. As it hath beene lately acted by the . . . lord Chamberlaine his servants." Other separate ed. 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622, 1629, 1634. Sources, mainly Holinshed; also an old play of which Shakespeare made but little use: "The true Tragedie of Richard the Third . . . with the smothering of the two yoong Princes in the Tower: With a lamentable end of Shore's wife. . . . And lastly the . . . joyning of the two noble Houses, Lancaster and Yorke," 1594. There exists also a Latin play in Senecan style by Legge, acted at St. John's College, Cambridge, 1579 (praised by Harington and Nash, text in Hazlitt, "Shakespeare's Library," vol. v.); it was apparently unknown to Shakespeare.

all gory on the stage. If actual beheadings offer difficulties, at least all the preparations are made before us, the last speech of the victim is delivered in our presence, with Ratcliff's word of encouragement :

Despatch, my lord, the duke would be at dinner ;
Make a short shrift, he longs to see your head.

The axe falls behind the scenes, and the instant after the head is brought in : "Enter Lovel and Ratcliff, with Hastings' head." Violent contrasts of such a nature as to shake the most stolid nerves are constantly offered to view ; in the same scene in which she spits on Gloster, the widowed Princess of Wales consents to marry him ; in opposition with darkest deeds, the pretty tricks and sayings of innocent children ; before despatching Clarence, asleep when they come, Murderer 1 and Murderer 2 display their wit at great length, in a scene which must have been a relish for the pit :

"*2nd Murderer.* What, shall we stab him as he sleeps ?

"*1st Murderer.* No ; he'll say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes."

And so on. The hero, a grand, awe-inspiring figure, but painted so black as to look almost a scarecrow, commits so many crimes that he is afraid it will not be believed, and that less than his due will be credited to him ; he recapitulates them now and then. Mothers or widows, queens or princesses, shrieking, cursing, half crazed, spit upon the monster and call him "son of hell," "rooting hog," "pois'nous hunchback'd toad." The spectacular part in the play is considerable ; apparitions are numerous ; eleven ghosts are shown on the stage and trouble Richard's sleep the night before Bosworth.¹

¹ A scenic transposition of the passage in Holinshed. "The fame went that he had the same night a dreadfull and terrible dreame : for it seemed to

In "King John,"¹ Shakespeare once more remodels an old play which had met with success. He adds some marvellous touches, revealing his growing genius; for example, the scene where John, without at first discovering himself, speaks so as to test and better secure faithful Hubert's devotion to him, then lets him understand that he is in trouble, a trouble to be guessed, not told:

. . . If thou could'st see me without eyes,
Hear me without thine ears. . . .

Then, sure of his ground, he plainly speaks out: the grave for that young boy, "a very serpent in my way."

The poet, however, does not scruple to follow, here again, the old play very closely. It is a case of the eagle donning the jackdaw's feathers. He sometimes transcribes his model's lines without any change, preserving the historical errors, which are innumerable, making of King John a kind of Henry VIII. who defies Rome, laughs at indulgences, and is "under Heaven, supreme Head,"² and suddenly modifying, as in the old play, the character of his hero, who seems to turn on a pivot, now a proud and high-spirited monarch, now a paltry weakling. The brag, merriment, coarseness, valiant deeds of the bastard Faulconbridge,³ the violent

him being asleepe, that he did see diverse images like terrible divels, which pulled and haled him, not suffering him to take anie quiet or rest."

¹ Acted about 1595, first printed in the folio of 1623; source, "The Troublesome Raigne of Iohn King of England, with the discoverie of King Richard Cordelions Base sonne (vulgarly named The Bastard Fawconbridge); also the death of King Iohn at Swinstead Abbey," 1591 (in two parts), other editions 1611, "written by W. Sh.," and 1622, "written by W. Shakespeare," the title-pages audaciously say.

² . . . We under Heaven are supreme Head . . .
So tell the Pope (iii. 1).

³ Only sketched in the old play, the anonymous author of which adapted to this personage traits and anecdotes attributed by Hall to a different one,

contrasts between the pretty little ways of a boyish victim and the ferocity of his tormentors, the ravings of a princess on the verge of madness,¹ word plays, conceits and puns, constant appeals to a patriotism of the crudest sort, are the chief elements of success.

The French are again treacherous, ungrateful, ignoble; they are fit to "hug with swine," they quake at the crowing of their own cock,

Thinking his voice an armed Englishman.

The Dauphin wins a battle which he would have lost without the help of some English lords, but it turns out that, traitor and ingrate, he intends "cutting off their heads" as soon as his power is secure; he has sworn it on the same altar where he had promised them "everlasting love." All this enraptured the hearers, fed their passions, and ensured the success of the play; all this was, to be sure, very human; it was not superhuman.

Happily the same audience that revelled in the rodomontades and massacres of these historical plays could also take interest in young maidens' dreams, in airy fancies and songs of love; and it was still to please it that Shakespeare, from that early period, began the splendid series of his romantic dramas. First, the "Two Gentlemen of Verona,"² an immense improve-

namely, to the famous "Bâtard d'Orléans," Dunois, the companion of Joan of Arc; see *e.g.* the scene in which the Bastard takes pride in being one, of royal heroic blood, rather than the legitimate son of an insignificant father—"the lawful sonne of that coward cuckolde Cauny," says Dunois (Boswell-Stone, "Shakspere's Holinshed," 1896, p. 49).

¹ Constance, sister-in-law to the king, rolls upon the ground, tearing her hair:

Death, death—O amiable lovely death,
Thou odoriferous stench! sound rottenness . . .
I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine. (iii. 4.)

² "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," performed about 1590-2; first printed

ment on "Love's Labour's Lost." The plot is an impossible one, but many scenes are exquisite; Shakespeare appears there with that God-bestowed power that was to be supremely his: he is a life-giver. The power is not yet fully developed. The stage hero, alive, flushed, with beating arteries, suddenly jerks with a grating sound and becomes a puppet again; the strings are visible, at times even the showman's hand. The contrast is singular and striking, for it is absolute; here the work of a street artist, chalk sketches on the pavement, there the work of the Muse. Thurio, Panthino, Speed, are taken from the reserve-store of puppets and properties that Shakespeare unfortunately never closed for good; their parts are so loosely connected with the play that they might be introduced into other dramas with scarcely any change. If great Will happened to glance at this work of his in his later days, he may have been tempted at moments to exclaim, like the host in his comedy: "By my halidom, I was fast asleep!" His genius was. Thurio is drawn from the puppet chest for brainless grotesques; Proteus from the chest for wicked, diabolical, and absurd ones. But Launce is a rabelaisian sketch of high vitality and powerful humour; Silvia is already the sprightly, witty, and kind-hearted maiden to whom Shakespeare was to give several sisters, and Marivaux, too, a few;¹ Julia, whom we shall also meet with again, is the tender heroine

in the folio of 1623. Sources: probably a lost play, performed at Greenwich in 158[5], and itself founded on an episode of Montemayor's "Diana."

¹ Characteristic of her (and a good example of *marivaudage*), the pretty device she uses to make Valentine divine her love. She asks him to write out for her in fine style a letter to send to the youth she says she loves—

And when it's writ, for my sake read it over:

And, if it please you, so; if not, why, so.

Valentine. If it please me, madam, what then?

Sylvia. Why, if it please you, take it for your labour.

And upon that she leaves him (ii. 1).

who disguises herself as a page, accepts every slight, because she loves, loves, loves. Her words are like a song, and she is sweetest when she tries to swell her warbler's voice to talk floods and storms :

The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns ;
 The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
 Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage ;
 But, when his fair course is not hindered,
 He makes sweet music with th' enamel'd stones,
 Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
 He overtaketh in his pilgrimage . . .
 Then let me go and hinder not my course (ii. 7).

The duke, "dux ex machina," earliest of a long line of potentates who will reign, in Shakespeare's plays, at Vienna, Venice, or Verona, has already the dignity pertaining to his function, which he understands well and which is ever the same, first to embroil by his decrees the heroes' affairs, then to mourn for them, or congratulate them, according to the occasion, at the end of the drama.

"Midsummer Night's Dream"¹ is the first in date of the Shakespearian dramas enjoying universal fame. Nothing better shows the breadth and variety of the poet's genius from his earliest years than this play,

¹ Acted about 1591 (Furnivall), 1593-4 (Dowden), 1594-5 (Lee) ; 1st ed. "for Th. Fisher," 1600 : "A Midsommer nights dreame. As it hath beene sundry times publickely acted by the . . . Lord Chamberlaine his servants. Written by William Shakespeare," another ed. "printed by J. Roberts," same date (the real date being, according to Greg, 1619 ; *Library*, Apr. 1908 ; cf. *Athenæum*, 4237 ff.). Concerning Oberon, who figured already with his fairies in Greene's "James IV." (above, p. 118), and who appears with "Chloris queene of the Faeryes" and "Sir David a schoolmaster of the Faery children," in "The Faery Pastorall" by W[illiam] P[ercy] 1603? (Roxb. Club 1824), see, e.g. G. Paris on "Huon de Bordeaux," in "Poèmes et Légendes du Moyen-Age" [1900], p. 24. This old French romance had been translated into English by Lord Berners, ab. 1530, and printed ab. 1534. A few hints are borrowed by Shakespeare from Plutarch's life of Theseus.

composed at the same period as "Richard III." and so different in tone. Theseus, "duke of Athens," is about to marry Hippolyta, "queen of the Amazons"; four days separate them from the great day:

Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

Several young lovers run after or fly from one another, all meant to agree. All happen to meet in "a wood near Athens," where Puck, Oberon, Titania, pass invisible through the iridescent evening air and hide in the hearts of flowers, and where some worthy artisans of the city, the carpenter, the joiner, the weaver, the bellows-mender and their peers, have retreated secretly to rehearse their "most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby," a tragedy to make hearers laugh, like so many tragedies before and after. Pyramus, therefore, and his "lady dear," one of the most popular subjects with dramatists and ballad makers, enliven the nuptials of Theseus and his bride, thus treated to one of those rustics' performances that Elizabeth delighted in. The poet's work, painted in loveliest colours and leading us by winding and flowery paths to the many espousals announced at the start, is permeated with youth and beauty; the lines are as music and the words have a melody which already gives the author his true rank, above all others; lines

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear . . .

What Helena says of Hermia is true of Shakespeare himself.

Truer still of him, with "Romeo," the first work in which the dramatist fully reveals himself: the tragic, the comic, the tender, the jocose, the marvellous, the incomparable poet.¹ A gentleman of Vicenza, Luigi da Porto, was following, one day, the road bordered by grassy rivulets which leads from Gradisca to Udine, the tall blue Alps on his right, and, on the other side, the marshy plains that stretch to the lagoons of Aquileia and to the sea. His travelling companion, an archer of Verona, to beguile the way, told him a story which the gentleman thought so touching that he wrote it down on reaching his journey's end. It was a version, with many variants, of the old story, told in different forms as early as the Greek times, and often since, of the two lovers parted by their families, the maiden dying, and her friend going to her tomb at night, there to find that her death was only an apparent death, caused by a potion or by magic. The beautiful French romance of Amadas and Ydoine, written in the twelfth century, had made that tale popular throughout Europe:

D'un amant vous vuel raconter
Et d'une amante ki ama
Mult loialment, tant com dura.

The young companions of Amadas made fun of him ("Li chevalier mult le gaboient"), as Benvolio does of Romeo, but for a different cause; serious minded Amadas disdained love; Ydoine, the Duke of Burgundy's

¹ An allusion of the nurse to an earthquake gives, as the probable date of the play, 1591; 1st ed. (very faulty) 1597: "An excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Iuliet, As it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicly, by the . . . L. of Hunsdon his servants. London, Printed by Iohn Danter"; 2nd ed. "newly corrected, augmented, and amended," 1599, both reprinted by P. A. Daniel, New Shakspeare Soc. 1874; other separate editions, 1609, one without date, and one in 1637 the first with Shakespeare's name.

daughter, was also loveless, "so proud she was." Amadas meets her, loves her at first sight, and for ever; but their families are opposed to their marriage. Ydoine dies and is buried in a sepulchre of "grey marble." Amadas, in despair, goes at night to the old wall-bound churchyard, on the border of the city, planted with ancient pine-trees, where,

En un sarcu de marbre bis
Le cors de la contesse ont mis.

While he is wetting the marble with his tears, he is confronted by a knight, not County Paris, but a weird warrior whom he fights as Romeo does Paris, but who, bound to disappear before the first rays of morn, confesses to him that Ydoine is not dead; let him remove a magic ring from her finger and she will come to life again. Ydoine wakes :

Sainte Marie, comment va ?
Où suis-je ? Ki ci m'aporta,
Qui me tient chi, sor ce tombel ? . . .¹

The story of equally unconquerable love, with the opposition of the two families and the seeming death of the heroine, told to Luigi da Porto, during his journey to Udine, was that of Romeo and Juliet and of

¹ "Amadas et Ydoine, poème d'aventures," ed. Hippeau, Paris, 1863, 8vo, on which see Gaston Paris (who shows the date of the composition to have been the twelfth century), in the *Furnivall Miscellany*, p. 386. A different version of a much later date is in Masuccio's "Novellino," second half of the fifteenth century, nov. xxxiii; the resemblance with the Romeo story is greater as concerns the potion and the part played by a friar, but less in other respects, especially the final scenes. In Masuccio there is no meeting of the lovers in a churchyard; Giannozza (Juliet), once come to life again, flies to Alexandria, where Mariotto (Romeo) had retired, but Mariotto, hearing of her death, had come to Siena, where he had been beheaded. Giannozza returns to Siena and dies of sorrow at the news.

the hatred between those Montagues and Capulets, who had already appeared in literature, under the pen of Dante :

Vieni a veder Montecchi e Cappelletti.¹

Da Porto's work was printed shortly after his death ; it had a considerable success and gave the story a new life ;² Adrien Sevin told it in French, transferring the events to Morea ;³ Bandello inserted it in his collection of novels ;⁴ Boaistuau translated Bandello's version into French ;⁵ Arthur Brooke translated Boaistuau into English verse,

¹ Dante, however, says nothing of their enmity. "Purgatorio," canto vi. l. 106.

² "Novella novamente ritrovata d'uno Innamoramento (di Romeo Montecchi e di Giulietta Capellati) il qual successe in Verona," 1535, 8vo (an undated edition is supposed to be of 1530) ; reprinted with variants as "La Giulietta," in "Rime e Prosa di Messer Luigi da Porto," Venice, 1539 ; dedicated to "Madonna Lucina Savorgnana," who had heard the author tell the story and wanted to have it in writing. The archer said to have told it was, "como quasi tutti i Veronese sono, bellissimo favellatore, chiamato Pellegrino." The events are supposed to take place at the time when "Bartholomeo della Scala" (Shakespeare's Escalus) reigned over Verona, early fourteenth century.

³ In the dedication of his translation of Boccaccio's "Filocopo" : "Et encore, pour vous mieux inciter à aimer fermement, je descriprai, avant que commencer mon œuvre, une moderne nouvelle advenue puis naguières en ma présence et au su de plusieurs. C'est qu'il y eut une forte place et ville en la Morée, nommée Courron . . ." etc.—"Le Philocope de Messire Jehan Boccace, Florentin," Paris, 1542, fol.

⁴ "Novelle," ii. 9. Bandello (who died bishop of Agen in France, 1561) attributes the tale to "Capitano Alessandro Peregrino," da Porto's Pellegrino.

⁵ "Histoire de deux Amans dont l'un mourut de venin, l'autre de tristesse," in "Histoires Tragiques," by Boaistuau and Belleforest, 1559, often reprinted (p. 38 of the Lyons ed., 1578). Boaistuau, or Boisteau, who translated this particular tale, takes great liberties with his model, whose style he finds "tant rude" and the "sentences tant maigres." He even goes so far as to modify Bandello's conclusion and to make Romeo die before Juliet's awakening : a grave responsibility, since this unfortunate change, accepted by Brooke and Paynter, was destined to be adopted by Shakespeare.

and Paynter translated the same into English prose.¹ The story had already furnished a subject for plays, one in French, two in Italian, one in English,² Lope de Vega was just writing one in Spanish,³ it was popular to the extent that tapestries were woven representing its incidents, when Shakespeare gave it its definitive form, and secured for it a place for ever in the literature of the world.

Here, for the first time, appears the properly dramatic side of his genius, that is, the art of linking the scenes together, of making us feel what atmosphere we breathe and among what kind of men we move, of preparing effects and surprises by timely hints so that we shall be indeed surprised but not startled, and we shall be moved

- ¹ "The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet," London, Tottel, 1562, by Arthur Brooke (d. 1563), who names Bandello on his title-page, but follows, with some changes, the French of Boaistuau; Paynter, "The Palace of Pleasure," 1566; Brooke's and Paynter's versions have been reprinted by P. A. Daniel, with an important introduction, New Shakspeare Soc., 1875. Gascoigne had alluded to the feuds between the Montagues and Capulets in his "Devise of a Maske for the Rt. Hon. Viscount Mountacute" (1572 ?); "Complete Works," ed. Cunliffe, 1907, vol. i. pp. 75, 83. Shakespeare seems to have known Paynter's version, but followed mainly Brooke's poem, probably also the lost English play.

² The French play, by Châteaueux, was acted with great success at Neufchâtel, Normandy, in 1581 (Lanson, *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 1903, pp. 199, 206). It is now lost. The principal Italian one was by Groto, "La Hadriana, tragedia nova . . . nuovamente stampata," Venice, 1583, 12mo, in verse, with a chorus of gentlewomen, and a semi-chorus of priests; dedication dated "di Hadria, il di 29 di Novembre, 1578." The time, names, and place are altered; Romeo becomes Latino, Juliet Hadriana; the scene is laid in "Hadria la antica." As in da Porto, however, the heroine awakes before the hero's death. The English play (for he does not seem to allude to a foreign one) is mentioned with praise by Arthur Brooke in his preface; we know nothing of it.

³ "Castelvines y Monteses, Tragicomedia," in three acts and in verse, with a happy ending; "Julia," laid "in the sepulchral vault of a church in Verona," awakes at the moment when enters "Roselo con una litera"; she will marry him:

Non soy tuya, conde Paris,
De Roselo soy.

because we can believe. A device, which he afterwards employed to satiety, and which was not yet hackneyed in his plays, is put to use with remarkable effect : the scene between the servants prefacing the scene between the masters, to offset it and quicken, so to say, its colours by contrast. The one that opens the play is admirable ; we see the evil gone down to the very roots, the hatreds dividing the city, the least of the varlets holding for Montague or for Capulet ; the slightest pretext rekindling the feud and deluging the streets with blood.

The personages, of matchless variety, light sketches or finished portraits, are all of them separate characters, having their own individuality ; all, to the meanest, have received the gift of life : brilliant young noblemen, prating, presumptuous, of ready tongue and ready sword, each, however, different from the other, as in real life ; incomparable nurse, on a par with Chaucer's immortal Wife of Bath ; uncompromising partizan with pursed up lips, whose bull-dog scent will detect Romeo before any one suspects his presence at the Capulets' ball ;¹ pensive friar, held throughout the town in great repute for his learning, whom we first meet collecting "baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers," and we shall not be surprised later when he resorts to wonder-working soporifics. Even the insignificant County Paris, even his page, even the apothecary of Mantua, have each their own physiognomy and temperament ; they are live beings. And these groups of personages are only a set-off for the main picture, the centre figures being Romeo and Juliet, who are all love. From the first words they utter, there

¹ The old custom of going to a ball, masked and without being invited, has been preserved in some Southern countries. I have seen it practised in Lisbon, where, in carnival time, troops of maskers are admitted into all the houses where there is an entertainment, provided only that the leader of the troop, in saluting the host, raises his mask and makes himself known. He thus answers for his companions.

can be no doubt, to love is what they live for. Romeo is young, handsome, brave, heir to a great name ; he cares for one thing alone, love. He loves love although he knows it not, for he has given his heart to "the fair Rosaline," and knows not Juliet. He goes to the Capulets only to meet Rosaline ; he lauds her to the skies :

One fairer than my love ! the all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

This but heightens the pedestal for Juliet.

Juliet appears and her supremacy is at once felt. Her beauty brightens the paternal home : nurse, father, mother, servants are under its sweet influence. In a house where beauty is, all the dwellers therein feel its effect, and Juliet's is a triumphant beauty. Romeo sees her, and remains dazzled, distracted ; he does not speak, he warbles, mingling a thousand puerilities with the intense and splendid thoughts inspired by his passion. That beauty will shine even in death ; its last glimmers will still, in the graveyard scene, stir the simple soul of County Paris. Juliet is nothing but love and beauty ; she is born solely to love and be loved ; she is made for that and that alone. Other heroines of Shakespeare are beautiful and loving, and are something else besides ; Desdemona has her conjugal virtues, Beatrice her wit, Cordelia her filial tenderness. Juliet has nothing ; ask of her nor intellectual gifts, nor wisdom, nor affection for her relatives. She has never opened a book, she would have accepted with more composure the news of her parents' death than that of Romeo's banishment.¹ She knew not her own self

¹

Tybalt's death

Was woe enough, if it had ended there :
Or,—if sour woe delights in fellowship,
And needly will be rank'd with other griefs,—
Why follow'd not, when she said, Tybalt's dead,

when the sudden appearance of the one to be loved revealed to her her destiny :

Go, ask his name : if he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

She has the vivacity, the impulsiveness, the violent impressions, the tenacious determination of her far away sisters, the semi-savage heroines of the epic tales of Ireland.¹ Love absorbs her entire being, and a love which is not content with poetry and ethereal discourse ; such discourse enchants her, but is only the music of the feast. No link save love binds her to life ; she is not such as can discover other interests, and be consoled. To sever that link is to kill her.

IV.

In 1594, all these plays had been performed, and not one had been printed ; Shakespeare's name, however, was already well known in the theatrical world ; his troupe was proud of him and happy to possess him ; it had as its poet, one whose plays made money. It was indeed, to say nothing of the honour, a great convenience to have him. He was always found ready to write, was neither quarrelsome nor envious ; people could say and print about him no matter what, he never replied ; he was not vain of his merit, and nothing makes a man more easy to live with than the absence of vanity.

Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,
Which modern lamentation might have mov'd ?
But, with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,
Romeo is banished ! . . . (iii. 2).

¹ Story of Derdriu in "The Murder of the sons of Usnech" ; love at first sight, in "How Cuchulainn courted Emer." D'Arbois de Jubainville, "Littérature Celtique," vol. v. pp. 44, 220, ff. ; above, vol. I. pp. 15 ff.

Thus is explained the even tenor of his life, his regular course toward affluence, the absence of quarrels and tragic incidents, his persistency in habits once formed. He remains where he is ; he changes theatre and troupe as little as he can ; he does the next year what he had done the year before. Having begun life as a player, he continues to play to the end, even when he has become wealthy, is a "gentleman," and bears the coat of arms secured by him for his father, cash down. Fellow-player of the Burbages at the start, he continues so until his death, following their fortunes from the Shoreditch theatres where he began, to the Globe and Blackfriars, which saw his greatest triumphs. Early a member of the Lord Chamberlain's troupe, he remained with it to the last. Let Greene, Nash, Dekker, Marston, Jonson, and the others quarrel ; let them know prison, debts, duels, and all the accidents of a bohemian life ; let them fight their friend and befriend their foe, change ideas, theatres, troupes, profession ; let them be actors first and then parsons, like Marston and Daborne : no wonder with such restless people. In the midst of their tumults, Shakespeare, who depicted all the tempests of passions, leads his quiet life, devoid of incidents. Friendly with all,¹ he does not associate intimately with any ; none of his contemporaries so seldom worked in

¹ He could justly say, like the poet in one of his plays :

My free drift
Halts not particularly . . .
no levelled malice
Infects one comma in the course I hold ;
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no tract behind.

("Timon," i. 1.)

One of his fellow-actors, Augustine Phillipps, bequeaths to him a gold piece of thirty shillings in friendly remembrance (1605) ; he himself, in his will, leaves souvenirs to three of his comrades.

collaboration with others as he; his promptitude and his fecundity were so great that he had apparently no need of help; even for a pressing work he went as fast as those squads of four or five employed by Henslowe. In the innumerable series of eulogistic pieces that the poets of his day were wont to ask of their friends when they ventured upon the printing of a book, his name is not once to be found. Reciprocally he asked nothing of any one when he published his two poems. When Elizabeth died, the whole chorus of authors, unanimously, bewailed her death. Again he kept apart and said nothing. Whilst from his pen came forth dramas more and more wonderful and stormy, he preserved as his ideal of life the existence of a worshipful citizen living at ease in his native town. Information concerning him is scant, as is usual with uneventful biographies, but all concurs in showing that such were really his dispositions and none can be quoted to the contrary.

During this period of his career he made an effort, however, to take rank among recognised men of letters, which mere dramatic compositions did not readily allow a writer to do. One of his fellow-townsmen, of his own age, Richard Field, the son of a Stratford tanner, had, as we know, settled in London as a printer; Shakespeare gave him his first poem, and, at the beginning of 1593, one could see announced on the posts which served for booksellers' advertisements: "Venus and Adonis.—Imprinted by Richard Field, and are to be sold at the signe of the White Greyhound in Paules Churchyard." The following year the same Field printed "Lucrece," second and last poetical work published by Shakespeare.¹

¹ "Lucrece.—Printed by Richard Field for John Harrison, and are to be sold at the signe of the White Greyhound in Paules Church-yard," 1594, 4to. Modern text, e.g. . "The Poems of Shakespeare," ed. Wyndham, London, 1898, 8vo. Both poems have been published in facsimile, with important introductions by Sidney Lee, Oxford, 1905, 2 vols. 4to.

The two texts are correct, printed with care ; they have none of those "long-tailed" titles invented by booksellers, and were, to all appearances, seen through the press by the author, a unique phenomenon in his career, but these were in his eyes important ventures. No preliminary pieces from friends of the poet precede his two works, but they have at least (also a unique case with him) the customary dedication to an aristocratic patron, the same in both instances, a young, valorous, and brilliant nobleman, of no austere morals, fond of literature and of the stage, "the right honorable Henre Wriothesly, earle of Southampton and baron of Tichfield," not yet twenty years of age. Shakespeare, *ætatis suæ* twenty-nine, recommends to him his "Venus," "first heire of his invention," his dramas evidently not counting for him as works, properly speaking, literary. It is, moreover, his firm intention that this attempt shall be followed by "some graver labour," to which he will not fail to devote all his "idle hours." He offered him "Lucrece" in 1594, in token of "love without end."

As with his plays, Shakespeare, instead of looking for new subjects, chose well-known ones, often treated and constantly alluded to ; their popularity was, in his eyes, an inducement. To provide for well-known airs the orchestral score that would fill the land with its melody was his constant practice throughout his career. The myth of Venus and Adonis, drawn from the most popular of Latin poets, Ovid, had been told in English by Spenser,¹

¹ The wals were round about aparelled
With costly clothes of *Arras* and of *Toure*,
In which with cunning hand was pourtraied
The love of Venus and her Paramoure
The faire Adonis, turned to a floure.

And there follows the whole story. The walls are those of Malecasta's "Castle Joyeous."—"Faerie Queene" book iii. canto 1, ll. 303 ff. (Grosart's

summed up by Lodge, alluded to by Marlowe, Greene, and others. The story of Lucrece, drawn from Livy and Ovid,¹ had been told by Chaucer,² Gower, Lydgate, Paynter, Barnabe Googe, and had been the subject of numerous ballads.³ The two pictures were as a foil one for the other, the first being devoted to sensual love and the second to constancy. But both dealt with physical love, and were sure to please the inmates of "Castle Joyeous."

In contrast to the sombre group of the puritans, still glittered and frisked in the sunlight the group of the young noblemen, all beribboned and gilded, superb,

ed.). Thomas Heywood put this subject on the stage, "Brazen Age," act ii., 1603. On Southampton as a protector of men of letters, see above, II. 544.

¹ Livy, book i. ch. 57, 58; Ovid, "Fasti," book ii. Shakespeare made use of both, either directly (as he well could, according to probabilities) or indirectly; there was in any case a French translation of Livy (an English one was registered in 1577): "Le premier [etc.] volume des grans décades de titus livius . . . nouvellement corrigées," Paris, fol., privilege of 1514. Lucrece's reason for killing herself is drawn by Shakespeare from Livy, not from Ovid:

"No, no," quod she, "no Dame hereafter living,
By my excuse shall claim excuse's giving."

In Livy: "Ego me etsi peccato absolvere, supplicio non libero; nec ulla deinde impudica Lucretiæ exemplo vivet." In the French translation she declares that her body must not survive: "S'il est quitte du péchié je ne veulx pas qu'il soit quitte du tourment; ne ne seray exemple que nulle chaste femme qui ait perdu sa chasteté doive vivre apres moy," fol. xxii.

² Now moot I seyn the exiling of kinges
Of Rome, for hir horrible doinges,
And of the last king Tarquinius
As saith Ovyde and Titus Livius:

"Incipit Legenda Lucrecie," in Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women." Cf. Gower, "Confessio Amantis," book vii. ll. 4754 ff.

³ "The greivous complaynt of Lucrece," licensed 1568-9; "A Ballett intituled the death of Lucryssie," licensed 1569-70, etc. Thomas Heywood wrote later a play on this ever popular subject: "The Rape of Lucrece, a true Roman Tragedie," 1608, full of ludicrously, not to say revoltingly, inappropriate merry songs (5th ed. 1638).

careless, well-read, enamoured of beauty, leading free lives, ancestors of those long-plumed cavaliers who were to display such valour and meet such tragic fates. To these dilettantes, whom the poets and artists of Italy, and already more than one English author, had familiarised with the splendours and the debauches of Olympus, Shakespeare offered sensual pictures, complacently painted with an expert, leisurely hand,¹ in glowing colours, enchanting to the eye of the unchaste. As he had surpassed in "Titus Andronicus" the horrors of "Tamburlaine," so he surpasses in his "Venus" the grace of past "Scyllas"² and the indecency of future "Pygmalions." It is, indeed, the group of worldly readers alone that Shakespeare seeks to please; even in his dedication to Southampton he adopts their disdainful and ironical tone; for them he describes his temptress, for them he modulates the exquisite music of his lines, displays his nudities, and through Venus's lips sings his hymn to physical love.

¹ The story is told by Ovid in 75 lines, by Shakespeare in 1194.

² By Lodge, the initiator of that style: "Scillaes Metamorphosis," 1589. See above, vol. II. p. 411. This poem certainly influenced Shakespeare, and he adopted its metre (stanzas of six lines, riming *a b a b c c*). Besides the fact that the story of Venus and Adonis is briefly told in the poem of Lodge (much more reserved than Shakespeare), the similitude of situations in both works is to be noted:

Glaucus, my love (quoth she), looke on thy lover,
Smile, gentle Glaucus, on the Nimph that likes thee;
But stark as stone sat he, and list not prove her:
Ah! silly Nimph, the selfsame God that strikes thee
With fancies darte, and hath thy freedome slaine,
Wounds Glaucus with the arrowe of disdaine.

As shown, however, by Sidney Lee (Introduction to his facsimile ed. p. 31), the notion of Adonis's coldness was probably derived by Shakespeare from Marlowe, who describes, in his "Hero," Venus's vain efforts—

To please the careless and disdainful eyes
Of proud Adonis.

"Lucrece," another risky subject, is treated by him with more reserve. If the melody of the verse remains sweet and the colouring brilliant, the poet transforms his heroes into reasoners and their discourses fill most of the work. Lucrece delivers a monologue of four hundred lines, with a long abstract *prosopopœia* :

O Opportunity, thy guilt is great !

incomparably less touching than the two lines in Ovid, from which those four hundred were evolved :

Jamque erat orta dies; passis sedet illa capillis,
Ut solet ad nati mater itura rogam.¹

Tarquin is a London gallant of illustrious family, proud of his coat of arms, but of ill-assured scepticism, such as there were too in London. He is not the conscienceless libertine of Roman history ; he recommends to himself in his monologues to avoid crime, to fear being a "shame to knighthood,"

And justly thus controls his thoughts unjust.

He is racked with remorse after his fault ; he is a Tarquin whom the next sermon at St. Paul's Cross will convert. In Shakespeare's two poems conceits abound ; in poems as in plays, they were a sure means of success. Lucrece's death being the culminating moment of the story, was the one which demanded, according to the æsthetics of the day, the most profuse ornamentation ; the poet surpasses himself. The blood that flows forms a map of the crime ; it surrounds the young woman's body,

¹ "Day now had dawned ; she sits, her hair dishevelled, like a mother about to follow her child's funeral." Chaucer's version of the story is scarcely longer than Ovid's ; Shakespeare has about fourteen lines for each one of the Latin poet.

which becomes like an island; part of the blood was red, another black, "that false Tarquin stained." A "watery rigol" can be discerned,

Which seems to weep upon the tainted place;

but the red blood retains its colour,

Blushing at that which is so putrified.¹

The poet, having, in using their own methods, surpassed the amourist and lyrical writers then in fashion, was thenceforth, and for that very reason, recognised by all as a poet; his two booklets had a considerable sale, especially his "Venus," which attained, during his lifetime, seven editions, more than did any of his plays. He gained, thanks to these works, a rank of his own on the English Parnassus. His success encouraged others, and poems in which mythological deities abandoned themselves to their terrestrial passions amid flowers, to the sound of harmonious verse, grew in numbers on the booksellers' stalls at St. Paul's. It was a fashion; their popularity lasted the time that fashions last. In the course of the hundred years following the first mention of Shakespeare in a printed work, 1592, minute researches in the literature of the period have led to the discovery of thirty-three allusions to "Venus" before 1642, and only sixteen after; and, on the other hand, eight allusions have been found to "The Tempest" before 1642, and twenty-one after:² a striking reversal in numbers.

The poet progresses steadily in life. His importance

¹ Line 1750. The death stroke is thus described :

Even here she sheathed in her harmless breast
A harmful knife, that thence her soul unsheathed.

The poem is in strophes of seven lines of ten syllables, riming *a b a b b c c*, Chaucer's so-called rime royal, the one he used, *e.g.*, in his "Troilus."

² Furnivall, "Fresh Allusions to Shakespeare," 1886, p. 372.

as an actor increases in the Lord Chamberlain's troupe, which is periodically ordered to perform at court, and receives ten pounds for each play: "To William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richarde Burbage, servauntes to the Lord Chamberleyne," we read in the court accounts of 1594, "... for twoe severall comedies or enterludes shewed by them before her Majestie in Christmas tyme laste paste, viz., upon St. Stephens daye and Innocentes daye . . . in all xx*li*."¹ The troupe is now in repute; its services are in request on important occasions; it plays before the Queen, at Whitehall or at Richmond, in 1596, 1597, 1598, 1600; it gives a performance at Somerset House, before its patron, Lord Hunsdon, then Lord Chamberlain, and foreign ambassadors, on the 6th of March, 1600; it plays again before the Queen at Christmas, 1601, and finally at Candlemas, 1603, six weeks before her death. The Inns of Court have, from time to time, at their annual festivities, some of Shakespeare's plays performed in their halls: "The Comedy of Errors," at Gray's Inn, in 1594; "Twelfth Night," at the Middle Temple, in 1602. In 1598, Meres bestows on Shakespeare, as a dramatist, the first great public praise he ever received, and, what is very important for the history of his works, gives the titles of twelve of his plays already performed at that date. He declares that the poet is the Plautus and the Seneca of England, being "among ye English the most excellent in both kinds for the stage," that is, for comedy and tragedy.² His

¹ The Queen being at Greenwich. Document discovered and published by Halliwell-Phillips, "Outlines," i. 121.

² "For comedy, witnes his 'Gentlemen of Verona,' his 'Errors,' his 'Love Labors Lost,' his 'Love Labours Wonne'" (probably a first version of "All's Well"), "his 'Midsummers Night Dreame,' and his 'Merchant of Venice'; for tragedy, his 'Richard the 2,' 'Richard the 3,' 'Henry the 4,' 'King John,' 'Titus Andronicus,' and his 'Romeo and Juliet.'"—"Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury," 1598, *e.g.*, in G. Gregory Smith, "Elizabethan Critical Essays," Oxford, 1904, vol. ii. p. 318.

plays are quoted in familiar conversation ; lovers, in real life, borrow so readily from "Romeo" that they are made fun of for it. Awaiting the time when Lucien Bonaparte will try, under the name of Romeo, to win the heart of Juliette Récamier,¹ we find, in 1598, the amorous Luscus speaking

Naught but pure Juliet and Romeo.²

From that moment it becomes notorious in the world of pirate booksellers that the name of Shakespeare is a profitable advertisement on a book-cover. Before 1598 some of his plays had been printed, not one with his name to it ; after 1598 no new one appears where the name is not, and pirates pay him, moreover, the compliment, which shows his popularity, of publishing under his name plays indifferent or execrable, which they expect thus to sell ; or else they attribute to him a whole miscellany like the "Passionate Pilgrime," in which figure only a few contributions from his pen.³

"Johannes factotum" is more and more useful to his

¹ "Le hasard ou l'amour me plaça près de vous . . . je fus subjugué. . . . Sans doute, Roméo ne sera qu'une victime de plus offerte par vous à l'indifférence. . . Eh ! bien, Juliette, Roméo se soumet au sort que vous lui préparez." Year 1800 ; Herriot, "Madame Récamier et ses Amis," Paris, 1904, i. pp. 50 ff.

² Marston, "Scourge of Villanie," 1598 ("Works," ed. Bullen, vol. iii. 372). Marston derides those playgoers who speak only in quotations ; his Luscus

Hath made a common-place book out of plays,
And speaks in print : at least what e'er he says
Is warranted by Curtain plaudities.

³ "The Passionate Pilgrime, by W. Shakespeare, printed for W. Iaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paules Churchyard," 1599 ; facsimile reprint by Sidney Lee, with interesting details on J. and W. Iaggard, Oxford, 1905. The only poems by Shakespeare contained in the volume consist in two of the famous sonnets, and three songs taken from "Love's Labour's Lost," five pieces, altogether, out of a total of twenty.

fellow-players ; he is master of his art ; his successes as a playwright are renewed from year to year. Proofs of his increasing wealth abound. Actors' profits were large, as we have seen, far more so than authors' ; and this is, doubtless, why Shakespeare, who never attained more than an honourable rank in the histrionic profession, continued nevertheless to act until about the time he retired from active life. Besides his interests in the Blackfriars theatre, he seems to have owned two whole shares at the Globe out of a total of sixteen ; which two brought in some £400 a year, worth about eight times as much, or £3,200 of our money. As a player he won yearly from £130 to £180 ; as an author, judging from the figures in Henslowe's diary, from £6 to £10 pounds per play during the first half of his career, and more afterwards.¹ The performances at court were a supplementary source of profit.

No wonder that, a few years after his beginnings, the practical citizen and the man of genius, so closely associated in the person of the poet, should have been able to develop as perfectly one as the other, which is not saying little. Shakespeare looks towards his native town ; there he intends to be some one ; he visits it periodically. He first sets aright his father's affairs ; the proceedings against the penniless old merchant cease ; as early as 1596, about eight years after his first play, the poet makes in favour of his father an application for a coat of arms, which fails, but he renews it in 1599 with success, and the erstwhile insolvent John Shakespeare has henceforth armorial bearings all his own, with the "speare" of imaginary ancestors,² and the French motto "*Non sans droict*," not

¹ Computations of Mr. Sidney Lee, "*Life*," pp. 196, ff.

² Not an unusual case, quite the reverse. Harrison, in his "*Description of Britaine*," shows that the purchase of armorial bearings under similar circumstances was of constant occurrence in his time : "*Who soever studieth the lawes . . . abideth in the universitie . . . or professeth physicke and the liberall sciences, or . . . can live without manuell labour, and thereto is able*

an inappropriate one for a blazon duly paid for. To sneerers he might have answered, like Beaumarchais later: Not mine?—"Monsieur, j'en ai la quittance."

Sneerers were not lacking. Ben Jonson, who possessed a hereditary coat of arms, and who has not let any of his contemporaries' foibles pass without deriding them, showed thereupon on the stage, that same year, the countryman's son, "so enamoured of the name of a gentleman that he will have it though he buys it." An obliging go-between offers his services to the would-be gentleman: "Why, now you ride to the city, you may buy one; I'll bring you where you shall ha' your choicé for money. . . . You shall have one take measure of you and make you a coat of arms to fit you, of what fashion you will." So said, so done; the new gentleman comes away quite dazzled from the heralds' office: "They do speak i' the strangest language and give a man the hardest terms for his money that ever you know. . . . I thank God I can write myself gentleman now; here is my patent, it cost me thirty pound." His brand-new coat of arms shines with all the colours of the rainbow. "A boar's head proper" adorns it "on a chief argent." And what may the motto be?—"Not without mustard."¹

and will beare the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall, for monie, have a cote of armes bestowed upon him by heralds (who in the charter of the same doo of custome pretend antiquitie and service, and manie gaie things) and thereunto being made so good cheape, be called master," ed. Furnivall (texts of 1577 and 1587), *New Shakspeare Society*, vol. i. p. 128 Shakespeare's friend and fellow-player, Augustine Phillipps, had quietly appropriated the arms of Sir W. Phillipps, Lord Bardolph, who had distinguished himself at Agincourt. Shakespeare himself figures in the list drawn in 1599 by Ralph Brooke, York Herald, of twenty-four persons to whom coats of arms had been unlawfully conceded. See Sidney Lee, "The Future of Shakespearean Research," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1906, p. 773.

¹ "Every Man out of his Humour," acted in 1599 and printed in 1600. The play was performed at the Globe; whether or not Shakespeare saw in it a personal allusion, as usual he made no protest; most likely he was the first to laugh. His transferring the name of Lord Bardolph to Falstaff's red-

It was a matter of indifference to Shakespeare to give cause for laughter to the wits of the capital; he laughed himself at justices proud to sign "Armiger" (Esquire), at new-made gentlemen and ennobled clowns:

—"I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.

—"Ay, and have been so any time these four hours."¹

A purchased coat of arms was then one of those vanities such as there have been many since, which the great city could make fun of, but which the country town took quite seriously; and, in his country town, Shakespeare meant to be one of the foremost citizens. In 1597 he had bought New Place, the largest house in Stratford, built in former days, near the Guild chapel, by that Hugh Clopton long the most illustrious nursling of the city.²

He is henceforth, in his native borough, the personage in view, the capitalist who can buy an estate, lend money, appeal to the authorities. In their financial or administrative difficulties the inhabitants advise one another to visit, in London, "our countriman Mr. Shaksper,"³ and claim his assistance.

nosed companion was not improbably done in jocose allusion to his friend Augustine Phillipps' self-bestowed ancestry.

¹ "Winter's Tale," v. 2. Concerning Justice Shallow "armigero," see "Merry Wives," i. 1.

² "This Clopton buildid also, by the north syde of this chapell, a praty howse of brike and tymbar, wherein he lived in his lattar dayes and dyed."—Leland, "Itinerary," ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, 1907-8, iv. 49.

³ Letter from Abraham Sturley, January 24, 159[8], to Richard Quiney, the latter being in London. Already in this letter the purchase of the lease of the Stratford tithes, which the poet was to make seven years later, is mentioned as "a faire marke for him to shoote at, and not impossible to hitt." Text in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," vol. ii. p. 57, with other letters in which the poet figures only as a rich and influential capitalist. One of his means of success in the enterprises which his compatriots recommend him to undertake is "the frendes he can make."

V.

Towards 1595 commences the period of maturity of Shakespeare's genius ; it lasts until about 1608, comprising first a majority of joyous and triumphant plays, then a succession of sombre tragedies and sorrowful dramas. On the summit of life two inclines meet : the ascent lighted by the rising, the descent by the declining sun.

The first of these plays are all filled with happiness, merriment, turbulent joy. The shrew is tamed amid shouts of laughter ;¹ the jesters, the grotesques, the characters belonging to the coarsest or to the most delicate comedy know that their hour has come, and they do not scruple to take advantage of it. Even in plays drawn from the national history, the part allotted to comedy, laughter, and merry-making is now considerable. Scenes between statesmen and heads of armies, archbishops'

¹ "The Taming of the Shrew," performed about 1596-7, first printed in the 1623 folio ; allusions, in the Induction, to Warwickshire localities ; some critics think they recognise a different hand in the under-plot, story of Bianca and her lovers. Source, "A Pleasant Conceited History, called the taming of a Shrew," pr. 1594, mentioned by Henslowe as acted by his players, same year, other editions 1596, 1607, closely followed by Shakespeare, Induction included, but he omits in his play, such as we have it, the necessary counterpart to the Induction, that is, the awakening of Sly. At the end of the old "Taming," Sly is shown opening his eyes and wondering whether he is not a lord :

Tapster. A Lord with a murrin : come, art thou drunken still ?

Threatened with what his wife may do to him, Sly declares that he does not care ; he has had "the breavest dreame . . ."

I know now how to tame a shrew,
I dreamt upon it all this night till now.

Similar anecdote told of Philip of Burgundy and of a drunkard, by Burton quoting Vives ; see below, p. 507. Katherine's submission, in the end, should be compared with that "de celle qui saillit sur la table," as told by La Tour Landry in his "Livre . . . pour l'enseignement de ses filles," ed. Montaiglon, p. 41. Fletcher wrote a continuation and counterblast to Shakespeare's play : "The Woman's Prize or the Tamer tamed," acted before 1633.

appeals to wisdom, fiery speeches by brave Hotspur, unable to use "holiday and lady terms," heroes' grave discourses and lyrical apostrophes, alternate with tavern and highway scenes, in which immortal Falstaff, surrounded by his myrmidons, displays his corpulency, his gluttonness, his shamelessness, and, more than all, his unfailing high spirits. The drama in which is played, under Henry IV., the fate of England, and, under Henry V., that of France, is commingled with a farcical, powerful, and truculent comedy, overflowing, noisy, ill-flavoured, full of coarse saws, clever repartees, gross jokes, and peerless traits of observation ; people, words, and places, low, filthy, greasy, but put on the stage with such a joyous impetuosity, provoking such fits of irrepressible hilarity as to make a very Rabelais envious.¹

These plays appeal to a patriotism as crude as before ; adversaries are still cowards, braggarts, traitors, etc. ; the Dauphin has so exactly the same faults as the one in "King John" that he seems to be the same prince negligently transferred from one play and from one century to another. No more now than formerly do Shakespeare or his public ask themselves what glory there could have been in vanquishing this supposed lot of poltroons, so abject that one of them surrenders at the first

¹ 1 and 2 "Henry IV.," probably acted between 1596 and 1598, 1st editions : "The History of Henrie the Fourth ; With the battell at Shrewsburie . . . With the humorous conceits of Sir Iohn Falstaffe," 1598, 2nd ed. 1599, 8th, 1639 ; "The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of sir Iohn Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll. . . . Written by William Shakespeare," 1600, another issue same year. "Henry V.," performed about 1599, 1st ed., very imperfect, "The Cronicle History of Henry the fift, With his battell fought at Agin Court in France. Together with Auntient Pistoll," 1600, other ed. 1602, 1608 (not 1608 but 1619 according to Greg, *The Library*, April, 1908). Source, Holinshed, and an old play, "The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth : containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court," printed 1598, other ed. 1617 ; in it, an example of scenes between ridiculous watchmen, viz., John Cobler, Robert Pewterer, and others.

word to Pistol the pander and the most cowardly of cowards, such poor soldiers, too, that they have ten thousand slain while their enemies count only twenty-five. The poet had before his eyes Holinshed, who mentions the twenty-five dead, and adds: "But other writers of greater credit affirme that there were slaine above five or six hundred persons."¹ The dramatist adopts the first figure, an impossible one, no doubt, but far more interesting in the eyes of his audience. He insists on the edifying character of the war undertaken against France; it is not through greed of conquest that Henry V. crosses the sea, but from love of justice; it is not his fault if he has a right to the crown of France; it would be a shirking of duty not to maintain that right. The king inquires with insistence of the Archbishop of Canterbury whether he can honestly, religiously, and genealogically wage that war:

And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading . . .
Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
How you awake our sleeping sword of war;
We charge you in the name of God, take heed.

* * * * *

May I, with right and conscience, make this claim?

Without the slightest doubt, replies the archbishop, and he reassures the tender conscience of the future conqueror by supplying proofs of his right as questionable as they are abundant.² The usurper's son who, having no right to the English crown, could scarcely have any to the French one, sets forth, therefore, with a mind at peace; his campaign will be both profitable and moral; he will display his humility and boast of it; if he boasts also of other things, the fault is not his:

¹ Ed. of 1586-7 (the one followed by Shakespeare), vol. iii. p. 555.

² "Henry V.," i. 2.

Yet forgive me God
That I do brag thus—this your air of France
Hath blown that vice in me.

He gives the victory to God, and like Elizabeth on the return of Drake, declares that the triumph, completed by a massacre of prisoners,¹ has been obtained "*auxilio divino*" :

And be it death proclaimed through our host
To boast of this, or take that praise from God
Which is His only.

Elizabeth having, it is said, desired to see Falstaff in love, Shakespeare wrote "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*."² It is, at once, a very pretty comedy of manners and a farcical play recalling Christmas pantomimes, or the story of "*Monsieur Jourdain*" when he was made "*Mamamouchi*." Whiffs of pure country air traverse the stage. Life in a small town, the manners of provincial folk, the vicinity of the castle, the proximity of the court, the stir caused by the passing of coaches, and the news of the arrival of a German duke, all this is rendered to perfection. Spices and English mustard, too strong for Southern taste, are not spared: abuse of caricatures and over-abundance of

¹ "*De froit sang, toute celle noblesse française fut illec décapitée et inhumainement détrenchie.*"—Jean de Waurin, an eye witness, "*Chroniques*" (Rolls), ii. p. 217.

² Acted about 1598-9; 1st ed., giving only a rough sketch of the play, perhaps a text hastily drawn up by Shakespeare to satisfy Elizabeth's orders (a tradition related by Dennis, who wrote an adaptation of Shakespeare's play 1702, and by Rowe, 1709): "A most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wives of Windsor. Enter-mixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humours of Syr Hugh the Welch Knight, Iustice Shallow, and his wise cousin, M. Slender. With the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll and Corporal Nym. By William Shakespeare. As it hath bene divers times Acted . . . Both before her Maiestie and elsewhere," 1602; other separate ed. 1619, 1630, 1st complete text in the 1623 folio. Some of the incidents have been traced to English translations of various Italian novels (one by Straparola).

the grotesque, boobies surpassing "silly Gille" in silliness, stutterers using one word for another: Slender does it because he is a simpleton, Doctor Caius because he is French, parson Evans because he is Welsh, there is no reason to stop. But Falstaff is at his very best, more needy, more unscrupulous, fatter, untidier, and more comical, too, as prompt at repartee, as inexhaustible and of a good humour as communicative as ever.

The romantic dramas of this period are full of surprising adventures, of jokes, drolleries, tragic accidents, but all, without exception, ending happily for Shakespeare's favourites. Several of these plays bear marks of hasty composition; they are incoherent, badly put together, improbable, and take up again old themes which had already served. In "*Much Ado about Nothing*,"¹ a new Friar Lawrence recommends to a new Juliet the old stratagem of a feigned death.² In "*Twelfth Night*,"³

¹ Performed about 1599; 1st and only separate edition. "*Much adoe about Nothing*. . . . Written by William Shakespeare," 1600. Sources: partly a lost old play, "*Historie of Ariodante and Genevora*," acted at court 1582-3, itself founded on Ariosto, "*Orlando*," v. (maidservant personating her mistress in a night scene on a balcony, to make believe that the latter has a lover; verse translation of this episode by P. Beverley, n. d., lic. 1565), and partly (story of the supposed death) the beautiful and touching novel xxii. in *Bandello*, French text in *Belleforest*. The plot of the novel is closely followed on several points, for example in the credulous hero's sudden change from love to hatred: "*Il fervente sincero amore che a Fenicia portava non solamente s'affredo, ma in crudel odio si converse.*" But there are some important alterations; the church scene is far more tragic in the story than in the play, the guilt of the traitor being discovered through his remorse, instead of by the exertions of the usual ridiculous constables. According to *Holleck-Weithmann*, Shakespeare may have followed also another lost English play, founded on the Italian novel, but with a comical element in it, hence the parts of Beatrice and Benedick, "*Zur Quellenfrage von . . . 'Much Ado*," *Heidelberg*, 1902. The *Ariodante* story supplied later the plot of the "*Partial Law*," ab. 1615-30, ed. *Dobell*, 1908.

² No such friar in *Bandello*, nor, much less, in Ariosto, who causes his heroine to be justified by her champion in single combat. Shakespeare borrows the idea of his friar from his own play of "*Romeo*."

³ Performed about 1601, acted at the Middle Temple, February 2, 160[2]; one of the audience, the barrister *Manningham* ("*Diary*," *Camden Society*,

the "Comedy of Errors" begins over again; the comic element is of the broadest, obtained by means of sheer mystifications which the personages inflict upon one another, and of simpletons, fools and gulls, of clowns, stutterers, and ridiculous constables: so many well-known types. With all its "errors," its young girl disguised as a eunuch, who is taken for a page, confounded with her brother, whom a lady wants to marry, who finally marries the duke, with all its romantic adventures, "Twelfth Night" is chiefly filled—with filling: jokes played on the simple-minded steward Malvolio, fooleries of ridiculous knights, clowneries of the professional fool;

1868, p. 18), has left a description of it: "At our feast, wee had a play called 'Twelve Night, or What you Will,' much like the Commedy of Errors, or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called Inganni." There were two such Italian plays, one by Gonzaga and one by Secchi, but, as J. Hunter has shown, Manningham must have rather meant 'Gl' Ingannati' ("New Illustrations of . . . Shakespeare," London, 1845, i. p. 396).

"Gl' Ingannati," written by the members of the Sienese Academy of the "Intronati" (Boobies), had been acted as the title records "ne i giuochi del Carnevale in Siena, l'anno 1531." It is a comedy in prose, with a spirited, talkative, unscrupulous nurse, a clever play, but full of the grossest indecencies; its name was given it "perche," says the Prologue, "poche persone intervengono nella favola che nel compimento non si trovano ingannati" (fooled). It had great success, and was translated into French by Ch. Estienne as "La Comédie du Sacrifice," 1543, so called from the title of the Induction, and later as "Les Abusez, comédie faite à la mode des anciens comiques," 1548; long and curious dedication to the Dauphin, in which the play is ranked even above "Pathelin avecq' sa Guillemette et son Drapier." Shakespeare probably knew this translation, as mention is made in the French Prologue of the "Nuict des Roys," and, in a note, of the "Jour des Roys," and he is more likely to have known that this was the equivalent of Twelfth Night, the title he chose for his play, than to have understood the purport of the corresponding Italian words: "Notte di Befana" (which night is simply mentioned as one when another play by the same "Intronati" had given offence to ladies). The name of Malvolio was probably derived from that of Agnol Malevolti, one of the personages in the Induction.

The same story is in Bandello; it was translated into French by Belleforest, and adapted from the French, with many changes, by Riche in his "Farewell to military Profession," 1581. Riche makes it begin with a shipwreck which was not in his models, and which Shakespeare borrowed from him.

the whole as different as possible from French taste, but highly relished, for its merriment, by London audiences¹; the play had, precisely on account of those practical jokes and caricatures, a success which endures still.

In "All's well that ends well,"² the character of the clown is a postiche one, and might be inserted, to say about the same things, into any other play; the plot is a series of improbabilities; the hero is chastised and put to shame at the beginning, when he is in the right, and rewarded at the end, when he has proved himself a libertine, liar, and calumniator. But the surprises offered by the old tale of Gilette de Narbonne, the revenge taken on her tyrant by a Griselda as virtuous, but less resigned than the other; the rascalities, boastings, cowardice, and obscenities of the wretched Parolles (a personage added by Shakespeare to the original plot, and a variety of the scoundrel type which had already met with favour on the stage), were so many elements of success.

In all the romantic dramas of that period, beginning with "Twelfth Night," woman reigns, plays the principal part, ties and unties the intrigue. By her wit, her wisdom, her virtues, her ingenuity, she dazzles all the representatives of the masculine sex: fools, simpletons, heroes, philosophers,

¹ Nothing better shows this difference than the English judgments on that comedy. Manningham notes in his diary, as particularly memorable, the practical jokes played on Malvolio, "making him believe they tooke him to be mad." This play, Halliwell-Phillipps does not hesitate to write, is "the perfection of English comedy," and "the most fascinating drama in the language" ("Outlines," vol. i. p. 200), which is certainly going very far.

² Performed about 1601-2 (Furnivall), 1595 (Lee); 1st ed. the folio of 1623; source: the old story of Gilette de Narbonne, a French fabliau of which Boccaccio made the 9th novel of his third day, the which novel was translated into English by Paynter, "Palace of Pleasure," 1566-7. If this play is the one that Meres calls "Love Labours Wonne," it must have been acted, perhaps under a different form, before 1598. Note that if Helena repeats often in the play that "all's well that ends well," she says too:

Will you be mine now you are doubly won? (v. 4).

lovers, hearts of rock, braggadocios. The universe is her domain, heaven inspires her conduct, she interprets enigmas, reveals to each his duty; all creation is at her feet. If, in "Much ado," Beatrice finds her match, and meets a Benedick capable of answering her attacks, the Rosalind of "As you like it,"¹ another heroine disguised as a page (the third now), leads the play, all the interest of which is at court when she happens to be there, and in the forest when it becomes her home. It is an imaginary forest, in the land of fancy, where an old duke, deprived of his throne, lives with his faithful lords, not troubling himself about his duchy, nor about anything else :

Et je dirai, songeant aux hommes, que font-ils ?

Et le ressouvenir des amours et des haines

Me bercera pareil au bruit des mers lointaines . . .

(Sully Prudhomme.)

But suddenly the forest, in which are also to be met amorous shepherds, a melancholy Jaques, a jovial, rascally and wanton clown, is invaded by Rosalind, and at once all its inhabitants are subject to her laws. Pretty, petulant, amorous, she does and says everything that passes through her head, solves all difficulties and problems, dictates to each his conduct; she knows that she is one of the poet's favourites, one of his spoiled children, that she can do anything she pleases, that he will let her do it; she even boasts of her privilege.

Still more visible is the poet's partiality in "The

¹ Performed about 1600, entered in the "Stationers' Registers" the same year, but printed only in the folio of 1623; source: the pretty and very popular novel by Lodge, "Rosalynde, Euphues golden Legacie," 1590 (8th ed. 1623). Lodge himself took his inspiration from the old "Tale of Gamelyn" that Chaucer had intended to introduce into his "Canterbury Tales"; see above, vol. I. p. 324, and "English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare," p. 202.

Merchant of Venice,"¹ the most beautiful of the plays of that class, with its mixture of intense and tragic reality and its impossible, but delightful fancies, its redoubtable Shylock, so well drawn, standing out sombre of aspect and clothing, in the clear light of Venice, stamped in our memories from his first words; its Antonio, pensive and kind, with the noble mien and pallid hues of an old portrait; its young gentlemen of brilliant wit and raiment, always ready to love. The shades who haunt the Corer Museum, on the marble border of the Grand Canal, are restored to life; the noble Venetians of the Villa Maser come down from the frescoes in which Veronese has figured them. That variety of scenes on the Piazza, about the Rialto, in the Ghetto, or in the ducal palace, all these personages, gay or gloomy, are dominated, enlightened, instructed, comforted, or punished by the lady of Belmont. Take away Belmont and the drama will not stand. Belmont is fairyland; everything there is young, beautiful, radiant, and charming; from there can come only happiness, joy, and marvels. This admitted, as it needs must be, there is nothing to do but let events take their course; there is only pleasure in store. Even the Moor from Morocco and high-spoken Arragon cannot cause the least anxiety; they please, on the contrary; they are part of the scenery, shown for the delight of our eyes. Who would

¹ Performed about 1596, 1st ed.: "The excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreame crueltie of Shyllocke the Iewe towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh: and the obtayning of Portia, by the choyse of three chests. . . . Written by W. Shakespeare," London, Tho. Heyes, 1600; other ed., J. Roberts, same year (but real date 1619 according to Greg, *Library*, Apr. 1908; cf. *Athenæum*, Nos. 4237 ff.), and 1637, 1652. Source: a lost play having the same double plot (story of the three caskets and story of the pound of flesh, both very old and very popular throughout all Europe; cf. above, I. p. 185), as is shown by an allusion of Gosson's, in his "Schoole of Abuse," 1579, to the effect that this old drama, called "The Jew," represented "the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody mindes of Usurers" (ed. Arber, p. 40).

wish to suppress Veronese's blackamoors and apes in his "Marriage at Cana"? Why drive them away or be unkind to them? They have, it is true, nothing to do with the miracle, but they have come with friendly intentions, to offer an agreeable sight to the onlookers.

At Belmont the park is incomparable, music is sweeter than elsewhere, the moon and stars are more brilliant, beauty never wanes, nor does love, nor do the inexhaustible treasures preserved there in sequins and ducats. Everything fair, young, and good is beloved, and the lady of the place is worthy of her lot. The inhabitants of Belmont are wrapped in *fayerye*; a magic halo follows them wherever they go, especially Portia, queen of that fairy land. Is the manner in which Antonio is saved from the Jew by the wise doctor of Padua unbelievable? Not at all; it is the magic of Belmont at work. It works to the utmost with the *sans-gêne* little doctor, a fairy doctor obviously. Before him, no more doge, no more "magnificoes," no more tribunal; it is he who pleads, renders the sentence, and devises the penalty; no one dreams of objecting: he comes from Belmont. The elegant Gratiano marries at the end, without so much as wincing, nor without any one being in the least surprised, a mere "waiting-maid," but she is a waiting-maid from Belmont. And so great is the charm of that enchanted park for lovers that, as soon as Lorenzo and Jessica arrive there, the spectator includes them in the sympathy and indulgence granted to all the inhabitants of the place, and forgets to hate and despise those young thieves.

VI.

Shakespeare's life continued to oscillate between two centres, London and Stratford. In London he earns and

spends; in Stratford he lays by. In the capital he acquires much fame and money, and wastes in common adventures much of his good repute. In Stratford he accumulates treasures of respectability; there he has father, mother, wife and children, goodly houses and fair lands. He remains faithful to the plan of life which he had adopted from the beginning. The citizens of the little town now saw the rich Mr. Shakespeare come back better and better off, a more and more important personage, a well-to-do landowner, influential yonder in the great city, where he played before the Queen and frequented the peers of the realm: great things were said of him. People came to him when in trouble and requested his help, and asked him, as Ronsard had been asked in his old age, to be godfather to a new-born child. Jovial, hearty, hospitable, but a man of order, and keeping his accounts with care, he bought a hundred and seven acres of good land in 1602, and farmed a moiety of the tithes of Stratford in 1605, an operation which brought him gains and law-suits in abundance.¹ He brooked no trifling in matters of business, and his debtors learnt with scant pleasure of his visits to the country.

In the capital his profits and his literary renown went on increasing; his theatre, the Globe, was the most popular of all; on the accession of James I. his comrades and he received the title of the King's Servants; they performed at court much oftener than in the time of Elizabeth. The company was sent for, at Whitehall, eleven times during the winter of 1604-5, and acted, among other plays, "Othello." When James I. gave in

¹ The chapter and other authorities of the collegial church of Stratford had "demysed, graunted, and to farme lette," in 1544, the tithes of Stratford and of a few other localities for 92 years. In 1605 it was a question of buying from the lessee one half of his rights for the years still to run. Shakespeare, qualified as "generosus" (gentleman) in the indenture (text in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," ii. p. 19), paid for it £440.

marriage to the Elector Palatine, Frederick V., his daughter who was to be the ancestress of the present Kings of England, seven plays of Shakespeare's were performed during the festivities.¹

Whether from the influence of his surroundings, from temptations, personal inclination, or the part which must be allotted to the weaker sides of human nature, certain it is that the famous "Will" did not, in London, set the example of domestic virtues. Belonging to the theatrical world, he lived in the manner habitual to that world, as a wealthy and popular player; he was not the man to disdain the favours of those city dames whose heads, as is well known, were easily turned by the stage and its actors; and he was not restrained by the presence of either wife or children. Why did he never bring them to London, but leave his daughters to grow up, his son to die, and her who had given herself to him in her youth to live as a widow most of the time, far from him? "Let it be borne in mind," replies a modern biographer, "that Shakespeare's occupations debarred him from the possibility of his sustaining even an approach to a continuous domestic life."² But those occupations in no way differed from those of Alleyn, Heminge, Condell, Burbage, and other actors who led domestic lives in the same place, at the same time, the former with the "sweet mouse," his wife, the latter with the spouse whom he made his sole executrix. If Shakespeare lived differently, it was from choice, not from necessity.

He observed, however, some measure in his follies; he never plunged into over-sandalous excesses, for the rumour of it would have come down to us, as has been the

¹ "Much Ado," "Tempest," "Winter's Tale," "Merry Wives," "Othello," "Julius Cæsar," "1 Henry IV.," May, 1613.—"Centurie of Prayse," p. 103.

² Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," vol. i. p. 129.

case with so many of his companions ; but his morality was not more rigorous than the average, for, by that too, he would have attracted attention, as happened with his friend Drayton ;¹ and we know, on the contrary, by a few anecdotes,² and by his own statements, that his reputation was that of his peers, which is to say that it was not free from reproach.

His statements are to be found in the work the most singular and the most difficult to interpret which has issued from his pen. In 1598 Meres had compared Shakespeare to Ovid, because of his poems and "his sugred sonnets among his private friends." The next year Jaggard published "The Passionate Pilgrime," and two of those sonnets, snatched by the pirate, figured in it, with the following lines in one of them :

Two loves have I of comfort and despair,
That like two spirits do suggest me still ;
My better angel is a man right fair,
My worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil . . .
And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend,
Suspect I may, yet not directly tell.³

Whether or not this publication betrayed the innermost

¹ Testimony of Meres, according to whom Drayton's "vertuous disposition, honest conversation, and well governed cariage" was "almost miraculous among good wits in these declining and corrupt times." Meres would doubtless have willingly added, if he could, to Drayton's name that of Shakespeare, which recurs often under his pen ; but he found occasion to speak only of the latter's genius and literary merit.—"Palladis Tamia" ; G. Gregory Smith, "Elizabethan Critical Essays," ii. p. 317.

² The well-known one that represents him supplanting his comrade Burbage at a love-tryst with the wife of a London citizen dates from his own days, figuring in the diary of John Manningham, March 13, 160[2].—Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," vol. ii. p. 82.

³ "Shakespeare's Sonnets," ed. Tyler, 1890, p. 305, note. This piece became later, with some changes, sonnet cxliv.

secret of his heart, Shakespeare, as usual, said nothing. The "sugred sonnets" continued to pass from hand to hand, and probably to grow in number. In 1609 appeared a volume having as title: "Shakespeare's sonnets. Never before Imprinted. At London. By G. Eld for T. T. and are to be solde by William Aspley."¹ "T. T.," that is to say Thomas Thorpe, was a literary retriever for piratical printers, and he had had the good fortune to get hold of an extraordinary series of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, all by Shakespeare, and developing the romance, real or imaginary, already hinted at in the "Passionate Pilgrime."²

A literary publication could scarcely go, in those days, without a dedication; for the torment of future critics, Thorpe printed the following one: "To the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets Mr. W. H. all happinesse and that eternitie promised by our ever-living poet wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth. —T. T."

It would take pages merely to enumerate the hypotheses built up on each of these words. The expenditure of labour and ingenuity has been prodigious; the literature of the subject grows daily, and an agreement between experts is as remote as ever. On the matter, the form,

¹ The edition had been divided between two booksellers, and part of the copies bear the name of John Wright instead of that of Aspley.

² Text in the editions of the complete works. Separate editions: "Shakespeare's Sonnets," ed. T. Tyler, London, 1st ed. 1890, 8vo, with engravings and copious notes (in favour of the Pembroke theory); ed. Dowden, 1881; "Poems of Shakespeare," ed. G. Wyndham, 1898; ed. Beeching, 1904, ed. Bullen, Stratford, 1905; facsimile ed. with an important introduction by Sidney Lee, reproducing the 1609 volume, Oxford, 1905.—Translation of the sonnets into French verse by F. Henry, Paris, 1900, and noteworthy article thereon by Augustin Filon, *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, April 15, 1901, discussing or recalling the various philosophic systems, and systems of the universe, which have been supposedly discovered in the sonnets (some very hazardous hypotheses); another translation in French verse, by Ch. M. Garnier, Paris, 1906-7.

and the occasion of the sonnets, critics and poets of highest rank continue, with conviction, to maintain opposite opinions, and new theories, skilfully defended, are from time to time added to the old ones, without any of their exponents being able to secure the general assent. Who is this Mr. W. H., "onlie begetter," primary cause,¹ of these sonnets? He is, say some, William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, open-minded, but of loose morals, a patron of artists and authors, and to whom Shakespeare's fellow-players dedicated, after the poet's death, the first edition of his works.

Impossible, reply others; there is no serious proof that he was ever interested in Shakespeare during the poet's lifetime. His companions, to be sure, when publishing his works in 1623, affirm the contrary, but it is a way of speaking. Never, besides, would Thorpe have risked having his ears cropped for publicly giving the name of "Mr." to a lord, Lord William Herbert, a title which, as parish registers show, that nobleman, being an earl's son, bore already at his baptism, which was, in sooth, no less early than he possibly could.

W. H. should rather, according to many writers, be Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, the only young nobleman known with certainty to have really patronised Shakespeare, and to whom, as to a connoisseur in poetry and love, he had dedicated his "Venus" and his "Lucrece."

To which is answered: by no manner of means; Henry Wriothesley's initials would be H. W. and not W. H.; he was at that date in possession of his earldom, and his being called "Mr." in the dedication would be still more inexplicable than for Herbert. Furthermore, in sonnet cxxxv, Shakespeare gives it clearly to be understood

¹ For "only," in the language of that day, has not merely the meaning of "unique," but also the meaning of "capital," "principal," "typical."

that his friend's name was, like his own, William, and not Henry.

It is neither one nor the other, replies one of Shakespeare's latest biographers, Mr. Sidney Lee, in his remarkable "Life" of the great poet. W. H. is simply William Hall, an under-pirate and trapper of manuscripts; it is he, no doubt, who brought the copy to Thorpe, and the latter thought appropriate to reward him by his wondrous dedication. In that sense only W. H. was the "begetter" of the sonnets, being, not he that caused their birth, but he that procured the text of them and rendered their publication possible. Mr. Lee, who is thoroughly conversant with the literature of the time, gives various examples of cases where "beget" and "begetter" have that meaning.¹

But first, shall we say, in our turn, those words had also the other meaning, which is contested by no one:

O, come hither,
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget.
(*"Pericles,"* v. 1.)

Then, for a hunter of manuscripts, William Hall, in handing his copy over to Thorpe, would have given proof of very singular abnegation, as, formerly a printer's

¹ "A Life of William Shakespeare," 1st ed. 1898. The question of the sonnets is there discussed very minutely; about one-third of the work is devoted to it; numerous and very interesting comparisons with the immense sonnet-literature of France, Italy, and England, pp. 83-160 and 374-445, the result of considerable original researches. See also Mr. Lee's introduction to "Shakespeare's Sonnets . . . facsimile," Oxford, 1905. Same interpretation of "begetter" in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," i. p. 226, and ii. 305. Other interpretations: W. H. = William Harvey (Mrs. C. C. Stopes; this personage would only have procured the MS.; the hero would be Southampton); = William Hamond (W. C. Hazlitt, "Shakespeare," 1902). Others have proposed some William Hughes or other, and even William Himself, which is going far, in spite of Wither having written for his "Abuses stript and whipt," 1613, the following dedication: "To Him-selfe, G. W. wisheth all happinesse."

apprentice, he had now a press of his own,¹ and, if he had really possessed the precious copy, he would doubtless have printed it himself without having recourse to any Thorpe, a perfectly useless intermediary, and who at that time could dispose of no press. The indications supplied by the title are perfectly natural if one excludes the hypothesis of a William Hall, and far less so if one admits it: G. Eld, printer by trade, has printed; T. T., pirate, who has no printing press and is not a bookseller, has brought the copy; W. Aspley, bookseller, has put the book on sale. There is no place for a fourth helper.

Besides, and above all, on one point at least the dedication is clear: the author of the publication, Thomas Thorpe, wishes Mr. W. H. "that eternitie," that particular one and no other, which the immortal poet has promised. Now this eternity, to which, indeed, Shakespeare recurs incessantly, in magnificent language, in his sonnets, is the purely literary survival that Ronsard had promised Cassandre, and that the poets of all time have lovingly prophesied to the object of their verse and of their tenderness. T. T., by that, says as clearly as possible that Mr. W. H. and the hero of the sonnets are one and the same person, and that Mr. W. H. has had consequently something more to do with those poems than merely secure the text of them.

But if that evanescent person really is, as I think, the same in the dedication and in the book, and if, on the other hand, he is neither Southampton nor Pembroke, then, it is asserted, he is no one; for no other "peer of the day bore a name which could be represented by the initials 'W. H.'"² To which it must be replied that

¹ S. Lee, "Life," p. 402. As to Thorpe, he had had, for a short while, a shop, at the sign of the "Tiger's Head"; but he seems to have possessed it only in 1608 and neither before nor after; *ibid.* p. 395.

² Sidney Lee, *ibid.* p. 94.

Shakespeare never said anywhere that a peer of the realm was in his mind, and Thorpe still less. The poet twice alludes to his friend's rank; in one place, attributing to him all of this world's goods, as hearts enamoured are so apt to do, he mentions: "beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit." Elsewhere, urging him to marry, he speaks of the "so fair a house"¹ to which the youth belonged. This does not necessarily imply a lordly house, far from it; and as to the importance Shakespeare might have attached to the continuation of even a secondary family, it is but natural and in accord with his personal ideas and those of his day; we may see by his will how much he desired the continuation of his own family, even in the female line, in the same place, on the same lands.

It must be observed, moreover, that in the ceaseless wishes formed by the poet for his friend's immortality, there figures not the slightest allusion to that military glory and those high functions at court or in the State which would necessarily have come to mind if it had been a question of some brilliant scion of one of the most powerful and illustrious families of the country. It seems, on reading the sonnets, as if their hero had had no chance of perpetuating his memory, save by his "sweet form" and rose-like beauty transmitted to his children and celebrated by Shakespeare: strange prognostics if he had really been a future Pembroke or an actual Southampton. Let us note, lastly, that in that period of intense literary production, many people of middle rank affected to patronise writers.² According to the

¹ Sonnets xiii and xxxvii.

² That the hero of the sonnets did so is not doubtful, for Shakespeare reproaches him with lending his ear to the flatteries of another poet than himself, and one of great merit (sonnets lxxix, lxxx, lxxxvii). This poet, for endeavours have been made to identify all the personages alluded to in the sonnet sequence, might be Chapman according to some, Barnes, Griffin, or Drayton according to others: no convincing proof in any of these cases.

authors of comedies and satires, it had even become a craze, like that of travelling. And on the stage were seen the fop, the parvenu, giving himself the airs of a patron of letters, such for example as that Gullio in the "Returne from Parnassus" who only swore by Shakespeare. Fops apart, the patronage of poets was certainly not reserved to peers of the realm.

To sum up, Mr. W. H. was, as it seems, the subject at once of the dedication and of the sonnets. He was rich, elegant, well read ("as fair in knowledge as in hue") and of good family; there is some chance that the poet magnifies rather than that he depreciates, so much does he like to see at their best the advantages bestowed by Fortune upon his friend. The probabilities are that Mr. W. H. was neither a lord nor a personage of note: hence the difficulty of an identification which has baffled all attempts. The opinion I venture to express is strongly corroborated by the fact that the publication of the sonnets produced no effect at all, and did not excite any curiosity. The literature of that time has been ransacked in vain: not one single allusion to them has been discovered.¹ If it had really been a question of the great of the land, a peer of the realm, a maid of honour² or other well-known persons, the slightest doubt, the vaguest suspicion as to this would have sufficed to make the book talked about, sold, if not even prohibited. But the public of that day, in a far better situation than we are to ascertain the truth or to suspect the romance, saw nothing in it but "sugred sonnets," of a

¹ The only mention ever found is not a literary allusion, but an item of expense noted by Alleyn, the actor, on the back of a letter received by him (and which was dated June 19, 1609): "Howshowld Stuff.—A book, Shaksper sonetts, 5d."—Warner, "Catalogue of MSS. at Dulwich," 1881, p. 72.

² As suggested by Mr. Tyler, who has tried to identify the lady of the sonnets with Mary Fitton, Elizabeth's not very edifying maid of honour. See, *contra*, "Gossip from a Muniment Room," 1574-1618, by Lady Newdigate-Newdegate, 1897, p. 32; fine portrait, p. 25.

style which it was beginning to weary of, and the staleness of which was not compensated by the importance of the heroes. No sequence of such poems was received more coldly; those of Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, Constable, had been often reprinted. Daniel's, published in 1592, had had five editions in three years. Shakespeare's book only attained a second edition (an incomplete one) thirty-one years after the first, long after the poet's death, and the new editor frankly acknowledged in his preface that these "sweetly composed poems of Master William Shakespeare . . . had not the fortune . . . to have the due accommodation of proportionable glory with the rest of his ever-living works."¹

On the whole problem, a critic who has done as much as any one to unravel the biography of the great man, Dr. Furnivall, concludes with reason thus: "I don't think it matters much who W. H. was. The great question is, Do Shakespeare's sonnets speak his own heart and thoughts, or not?"² On that point, unfortunately, opposition is quite as absolute, between authorities quite as high.

Yes, reply Dr. Furnivall³ and Mr. Dowden, 'tis the drama of the inward life of a great writer which is unrolled before our eyes; No, reply Delius, Halliwell-Phillipps⁴ and Mr. Lee, they are nothing but exercises of style and

¹ John Benson's Preface to "Poems written by Wil. Shakespeare, Gent.," 1640, 12mo. Cf. Tyler, p. 138. Benson's ed. was reprinted only in 1710.

² The "Leopold Shakspeare," p. lxiii.

³ "They are the records of his own loves and fears. And I believe that if the acceptance of them had not involved the consequence of Shakspeare's intrigue with a married woman, all readers would have taken the sonnets as speaking of Shakspeare's own life. But his admirers are so anxious to remove every stain from him that they contend for a non-natural interpretation of his poems."—"Leopold Shakspeare," p. lxiv.

⁴ "These strange poems were an assemblage of separate contributions made by their writer to the albums of his friends, probably no two of the latter being favoured with identical compositions."—Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," vol. i. p. 173.

sports of the imagination ; the share of autobiography is insignificant ; the dark lady of Shakespeare's sonnets "may be relegated to the ranks of the creatures of his fancy."¹ Critics failing to agree, it seems that poets at least might be appealed to, and solve the problem. Who, better than they, can reveal the secret of another poet and discern what is an amusement of the mind and what a cry from the heart? But here again, a new and more grievous disappointment. For Wordsworth, the sonnets open to us Shakespeare's inner soul :

With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart.

For Browning, to believe in the sincerity of the sonnets would be to uncrown Shakespeare : if he did unlock his heart there, "the less Shakespeare he."²

The fact remains, however, that these poems exist, that they are really by Shakespeare, and it is open to the humblest of his admirers to read them without any preconceived opinion and to form their own unprejudiced judgment. They will find in them, somewhat as in all the master's works, a mixture of the exquisite and the hideous ; pearls and mire ; songs of love, triumphant³ or despairing, ideal or bestial ; passionate accents so piercing that they cannot come, it seems, but from the heart ; details that would have no interest if they were not taken from reality ; and with that, conceits, word-plays, samples of clever craftsmanship, imitation of others, the working anew of those sonnet themes which, in that epoch of amourists, were common property ;⁴ in short, a mixture of

¹ "Life" by Sidney Lee, p. 123.

² "Leopold Shakspeare," p. lxvi.

³ Ex. sonnet xxix, quoted further, p. 240.

⁴ A curious example (which has not, I think, been pointed out), is sonnet cxxviii, about the virginals on which the dark lady plays : a typical sonnet

the real and the imaginary, such as is to be met with to some extent in all poets, including the most sincere, and which would have been recognised, no doubt, in Shakespeare too, were it not for his privilege of exciting sentiments excessive, passionate, and absolute. To believe that everything in his sonnets corresponds to the realities of his life, or to believe that nothing does, is equally venturesome. Because a poet puts in his verses a literary reminiscence, an irrelevant witticism, or because he takes up several times the same theme, some want him not to have felt anything: what a mistake! It happens to the truest poets, and the most sincerely moved, to hear their passion sing at various moments, in diverse keys, to transcribe several times its chant or plaint, and to mingle it too with distant strains, heard in days gone by, they know not where, nor from whose lips. But the prime mover has nevertheless been their passion.

To admit that Shakespeare's sonnets are mere literary exercises seems impossible, not only on account of their ring and tone, which bespeak realities (though this has been disputed), not only because it seems very improbable that such a sensitive nature never felt anything, and that, having felt something, he would have availed himself, when writing his lyrics, of his book learning rather than of his experience, but also because too many of the facts, details, and incidents inserted by him, are absolutely un-

theme which Ben Jonson makes fun of in "Every man out of his Humour," 1599. Shakespeare writes, speaking of his "poor lips" .

To be so tickled they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait. . .

Jonson's Fastidious Brisk says: "You see the subject of her sweet fingers there—oh, she tickles it so. . . . I'll tell you a good jest now. . . . I have wished myself to be that instrument, I think a thousand times, and not so few by Heaven" (iii. 3).

interesting if not true, and are, moreover, quite opposed to the æsthetics of the genre, to the *credo* of the amourist, of the poet who writes to exercise his pen. We have seen before¹ what a contradiction facts, newly come to light, have given to those who pretended that Ronsard's *Cassandre*, a far more shadowy being than Shakespeare's dark lady, had been nothing but "a creature of his fancy"—to apply to her Mr. Lee's words. She turns out to have been a real woman, and her romantic name to have been her true name, she was *Cassandra Salvati*. Like Shakespeare's friend and like *Jodelle's*, she was dark, and so well established was then the rule that a poet's idol must needs be fair, that the mere fact of one being described as otherwise would go far to show that a real person, whose real colouring could not be easily disposed of, was in question. Shakespeare and *Jodelle* do not conceal their disgust; Ronsard, on the contrary, takes pride in the sombre complexion of his Italian beauty :

Je veux mourir pour le brun de ce teint.

All three think of a real woman of flesh and blood.

Shakespeare's sonnets have the number of lines, but not the difficult metrical arrangement of the Italian or French sonnet. They are composed of three quatrains with alternate rimes, each strophe having its own set of rimes, and of a couplet, which serves as a conclusion. In the series which they form, one hundred and twenty-six are devoted to a friend, the good angel, the others to a mistress, the dark angel. For the friend, Shakespeare is all admiration, tenderness, and indulgence; the vocabulary he uses, the emotions and the jealousy he feels, are those

¹ Vol. II. p. 385.

of the most ardent passion ; he trembles, he remains speechless,

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part.

That passion is so intense that its reality must, the poet thinks, appear to all eyes—so intense,

That every word doth almost tell my name.

He has that exaggerated sense of his indignity and of his lowliness in comparison with the supreme merits of the friend which every lover has felt, and every poet has described. More than one of his sonnets are what he ironically calls elsewhere "discourses of disability."¹ Like innumerable poets of the century, too, he takes comfort in the thought of the immortality of his verse.

Something morbid exhales from these poems. The spirit of the Renaissance is clearly discernible in them, as well as an unconscious and involuntary platonism, the platonism of Plato, and not that of latter-day commentators, the real one, that which, for all that it rose as high as the clouds, none the less struck its roots beneath the miry earth. Here the roots are partly visible, and pagans never wrote anything more pagan than this series of sonnets. That which causes most of the poet's transports and ecstasies is the mere material beauty of his friend, the beauty of his eye, his lips, his hand, his foot ; it is his "form," his "loveliness,"

And all those beauties whereof now he's king,²

which must be perpetuated ; it would be a crime of lèse-

¹ "Two Gentlemen," iv. 4.

² Sonnets i, xiii, lxiii, cvi.

humanity to let that "beauty's treasure" perish; it must be propagated and reproduced, let him marry and have children; seventeen sonnets develop this idea. The friend, "thou my rose," has nothing else to propagate but his "woman's face with Nature's own hand painted."¹ Those who "look into the beauty of [his] mind" find there only corruption and "the rank smell of weeds":

O what a mansion have those vices got!

The friend loves himself, is fond of his own beauty, is "contracted to [his] own bright eyes." No other philosophical or moral argument is invoked by the poet than that of Horace: time flies, beware of the wrinkles and of the gloom of the fortieth year; summer wanes, the violet fades—

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end.²

The poet recurs incessantly to his advice: "breed another thee"; to do so is to live again, to secure a kind of immortality.

Physical beauty is of such value that it secures its owner pardon for every sin; physical ugliness is the fault for which there is no remission. The man friend and the woman seem to have been differently endowed by Nature in this respect, but to have had the same kind of morals, and to have been so well made to understand each other that they did. The duped poet who, like Othello, would have been happy "so he had nothing known,"³ is all

¹ A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion. (xx.)

² Sonnets i, lxix, lx.

³ So shall I live supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband . . . (xciii.)

indulgence for his friend : nothing but good can come from beauty ; he is all disdain, scorn, and hate for the woman who, devoid of beauty, has surely all the wrong on her side and must have been the instigator. He overwhelms her with coarse insults, he reproaches her for her "so foul a face," her "dun" complexion, her "breath" which "reeks," the "black wires" that "grow on her head" ; he makes her pay, by his sarcasms, for the disgust he feels for himself and for the weakness which brings him ever back to his demon "as black as hell," like him married, and the violator of vows as sacred as his own.¹ Villon scarcely speaks more freely of his "grosse Margot."

The final impression is one of sadness, sadness of the morrow after a lewd feast, harbinger of an evening still sadder. The poet reminds himself too of the flight of time, the coming of wrinkles, the failure of no one knows what ambitions—

I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought.

He feels regret at having neither the beauty of this one, nor the friends of that other, nor the art of yet a third ; at his life being spent in a dubious social rank ; he resents the humiliation of depending upon the applause of the vulgar, of knowing he is ill-spoken of, and that his friend will perhaps be reproached for having loved a friend "nothing worth." He upbraids Fortune,

That did not better for my life provide
Than public means, which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand.

Your love and pity doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp't upon my brow.²

He feels, in those moments, the melancholy pessimism

¹ Sonnets cxlii and clii.

² *Ibid.*, xxx, cxi, cxii.

of the weary epicurean ; but then, at times, Love plays the consoler, and all is again triumph and joy :

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state . . .
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
 Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
 Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope. . .
 Haply I think on thee ;—and then my state,
 Like to the lark, at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate ;
 For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings. (xxix.)

Sadness recurs ; he feels old and he says so :¹ a proof, commentators have declared, that he is developing a purely literary theme, for he was scarcely thirty-five. But the sense of the passing of time is one of those which act the most on the impressionable souls of poets, and many at all epochs have, as early in life and even earlier, contemplated with emotion the “phantom with blanched lips”—

Le fantôme est venu de la trentième année.
 (Bourget.)

Spenser, as we have seen, had displayed the same apprehensiveness, “*ætatis suæ*” twenty-seven.²

As for the shadowy beyond, Shakespeare speaks of it in his sonnets, but in the same strains as Claudio or Hamlet ;

¹ For example, in the beautiful sonnet lxxiii :

That time of the year thou may'st in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where last the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day,
 As after sunset fadeth in the west.

² Above, vol. II. p. 467.

he does not seem to have even their doubts ; he will be "hid in death's dateless night" ; to die is to go,

From this vile world with vilest worms to dwell.

No allusion to a Christian paradise, not even to a possible meeting in classical Elysian Fields ; he expresses here fewer hopes than the pagans themselves. If his spirit survives, it will be in the memory of his friend :

The earth can have but earth, which is his due,
My spirit is thine, the better part of me.¹

If his friend survives, it will be in his posterity and in the poet's sonnets.² At that thought, a reaction takes place in him, as happens so easily in the changeful soul of artists ; pessimism vanishes for a moment, and we have marvellous songs of triumph, bursting forth on the desolate moor strewn with lost illusions, among the graves of the churchyard where lie buried, youth, hopes, virtues. He too disposes of that supreme gift, beauty ; he can bestow that halo, the most splendid and durable of all ; in his wretchedness, which in the abjection of his hours of gloom he fancied irremediable, he remembers that power which is his : what the blind fates above and the forces of nature cannot do, he can ; he can bestow immortality. That thought is for him the main consolation ; neither priests nor philosophers have taught him anything that could soothe his troubled heart ; the Muse works this wonder, and dictates to him his finest lines, of most resplendent lyricism :

Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er read ;
And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead. . . . (lxxxi.)

¹ Sonnets xxx, lxxi, lxxiv.

² . . . In it and in my rime. (xvii.)

In spite of Death,

I'll live in this poor rime,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes,
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent. (cvii.)

Or again in the splendid sonnet lxxv :

Since brass, nor stone, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wrackful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation ! where, alack !
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright. (lxxv.)

Poets' souls are, above all, impressionable ; if the great events of life draw from them cries of agony or of triumph heard afar, slight variations of sentiment, tone, or colour resound too, or are reflected in their minds. They make us see, hear, and comprehend the imperceptible ; deprived of their help, left to themselves, our eyes would have looked without seeing and our ears would have listened without hearing. They heighten the tones that our grosser senses would not have perceived ; they render clear the confused image of things. The best among them never speak but with absolute sincerity ; but many, however, and not of the least, have contradictory and momentary sincerities, pledging and perjuring themselves in perfect good faith, enamoured of a master or enamoured of liberty, loving for ever this woman in the morning and for ever that other in the

evening, gnawed by an infinite and incurable sadness in the silence of their closet, and capable all at once of making the tavern ring with their bursts of inexhaustible joy, giving points to Falstaff and speaking her own language to Mrs. Quickly: they are impressionable.

Shakespeare easily recovered his composure and his spirits; whatever may have been his secret thoughts, his contemporaries were struck above all by his gaiety. The oldest testimonies show him joyous rather than pensive. Fuller, who was born eight years before the poet's death and could easily gather information, writes: "His genius generally was jocular and inclining him to festivity, yet he could, when so disposed, be solemn and serious, as appears by his tragedies."¹

His numerous descriptions of taverns, even the lowest, those that would almost deserve another name, betray familiar acquaintance. In these or in others, in Mrs. Quickly's pot-house or in the literary taverns where gallants came to take lessons in wit by listening to poets and by storing their memories, he held his own, forgot all melancholy, and dazzled the audience by his humour and spirits: gallants had plenty to note. That place which he held so well was, however, not the foremost one. King of taverns, as he was later king of letters, his rival, Ben Jonson, surly, domineering, blunt, disdainful, of voluminous proportions and thundering voice, proud of his learning, sharp in his repartees, prompt to quarrel and to make peace, saying fearlessly his say to each and all, reigned

¹ "History of the Worthies of England—Warwickshire"; 1662, fol. post-humous; Fuller began to work at it about 1643. Neither does the description of Shakespeare's character by Jonson who knew him personally, and better than anyone, give at all the idea of a sombre turn of mind: "He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions and gentle expressions."—"Timber or Discoveries," lxiv. He was "very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smooth witt," Aubrey wrote, quoting "old Mr. Beeston" who "knew most of [Shakespeare] from Mr. Lacy."—"Brief Lives," ed. Clark, 1898, i. 97, ii. 227.

supreme at the table, exciting admiration by the boldness of his judgments and the depth of his bumpers. In their "wit combats," a unique description of which we possess, from the pen of this same Fuller, some thirty years a contemporary of Jonson's, stout Ben, full of knowledge, but slower to move, was "like a Spanish great gallion . . . solid but slow in his performances." Shakespeare was like an "English man of war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

The encounters must have been sharp, for Jonson was not the man to spare his fellow-writer. He did not scruple to pass judgment on him even before the general public of the theatres, ridiculing the mistakes that escaped him in too hurriedly written dramas, and the too easy means of pleasing to which he had recourse: massacres of "Titus Andronicus," monstrous Caliban of the "Tempest," immoderate use of ghosts, three figurants to represent the wars of York and Lancaster. We may imagine if, in the free discussions at the tavern, during drinking bouts, the burly man was likely to restrain himself. Shakespeare owed him no grudge for it, never that we know wrote a line against him,¹ let him quarrel and make up as he would. The great poet's good nature won the day. Jonson in the end remained his friend, and was able to say of him with truth: "I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side of idolatry, as much as any."²

¹ A rather obscure allusion in the "Returne from Parnassus," iv. 3, has led to the supposition that Shakespeare might have written a play against Jonson (Br. Nicholson, "Ben Jonson," "Mermaid Series," i. 262). But there is no trace of such a play; it would be very surprising, from all we know of Shakespeare, that he should have written one; more surprising still that Jonson should have answered nothing. In speaking of the "purge" given Jonson by Shakespeare, the author probably alludes to Jonson's indifferent success, easily eclipsed by the very popular Shakespeare, "a shrewd fellow indeed."

² "Timber," lxiv.

The discussions ended, the pots emptied, the candles put out, Shakespeare would return to his lodging, near the Bear-garden in Southwark, where he was established as early as 1596; and there he would be again met, especially at that period of his life which we are reaching, by his melancholy or tragic thoughts.[†] The outward man remained the same, as cheery and hearty as ever, as little inclined to quarrel, as careful in the husbanding of his property; but the thinker was decidedly turning toward sombre prospects. Having the choice, knowing that one and the other means of pleasing were equally efficacious and equally accessible to him, his preference was now for lugubrious dramas and pessimistic studies of humanity. This persistency cannot but be the token (a phenomenon rare in his life) of a change in the inward man and of a new turn of his mind.

VII.

During the eight or ten first years of the new century, Shakespeare remains at the zenith of his genius, but his joyous optimism wanes. The incomparable dramas of that period are penetrated with sadness, the work, it seems, of one who contemplates with melancholy his shattered beliefs and lost illusions. The pictures he offers now to view show liberty abolished, virtue crushed under woes worse than those reserved to vice, the righteous unable to do right: the force of circumstances in an evil world, or a defect of their own will, trammels their efforts; the stone that, covered with sweat, their nerves strained and their hands bleeding, they roll upwards, falls back with a crash, destroying the innocent on its track, the being

[†] When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past. . . (S. xxx.)
 . . .
 Weary of my toil, I haste me to my bed. (xxii.)

they had loved, the flower whose perfume they had breathed. Thorns are growing in the abandoned garden of the Capulets.

The heroes of the great dramas of that period, consumed by their passions, a prey to their own thoughts, torn by doubts, sick at heart, disabled in mind, hesitate, confronted by the duties and temptations along their path; and having decided for good or for evil, go forth, one and all, *pari passu*, to the same frightful catastrophe. The world is awry; its glory, its beauty, its justice are so many idle fancies.

On the terraces of Elsinore wanders Prince Hamlet,¹

¹ The play was apparently played, in a first and somewhat sketchy form, in 1601 or 1602, in a second, with great changes and improvements, in 1603 or 1604. It was registered in July, 1602. First ed., giving a very unsatisfactory text of the 1st version, perhaps stenographed during the performance: "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. As it hath bene diverse times acted . . . in . . . London: as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where," 1603; 2nd ed., "Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie," 1604, other ed. 1605, 1611, 1637, and one undated. The accepted text is a combination of the quarto of 1604 and the folio of 1623.

Source, a lost play, probably by Kyd, acted with great success in or before 1589, and whose tragical Seneca-like discourses are scoffed at by Nash in his sprightly preface to Greene's "Menaphon." Everyone, says he, will nowadays write plays, dramatic art has become the refuge of those who have failed in other trades, and "could scarcely Latinize their neck verse if they should have neede; yet English Seneca read by Candle-light yeelds many good sentences, as *Blood is a begger*, and so forth; and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, hee will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfulls of tragicall speeches."—1589, "Works of Nash," McKerrow, iii. 315.

The allusion to the terrace scene is obvious; it proves besides that Shakespeare must have found the embryo of Hamlet's meditations on death in the old play, where they were imitated from Seneca. Although, in Shakespeare, imitation is only in the second degree, marked traces of it can be detected. Compare, in particular, the famous monologue "To be or not to be," and the chorus of the second act of Seneca's "Troas," quoted in part above, p. 26. Besides Seneca, the "Mirror for Magistrates" had familiarised the public with ghosts coming back to relate their past.

The story itself, with, however, important variants, was very well known. Told in Latin by Saxo Grammaticus the Dane (twelfth century), in Italian by

young, handsome, learned, full of inborn kindliness, meant to live virtuous and to shed happiness around him. He sheds death and misfortune, casts the innocent to the abyss, himself racked and torn by the thought of the duty to be accomplished as much as any criminal by remorse : life has laid upon him a task out of proportion to his will.

Macbeth,¹ too, is a dreamer ; that fighter who wins battles is, in reality, a man of vain fancies and over-excitable nerves. In his youth, his senses "cool'd to hear

Bandello, it figured, in French, among Belleforest's "*Histoires Tragiques*." There are also versions in English and Icelandic prose. "Rosencrantz" and "Guildenstern" bear the names of Danish families illustrious in the sixteenth century and which exist still ; Shakespeare doubtless found them in the earlier play. The English envoy to Denmark, writing for Burghley's information an account of the royal household in 1588, enumerates, among the principal personages : "Petrus Guldenstern de Tym, regni marescallus" and "Georgius Rosencrantz de Rosenholme, magister palatii."—Ellis, "*Original Letters*," 2nd series, vol. iii. p. 143. On a tablet of 1666, to be seen in the Roskilde cathedral, and sculptured with the arms of the most illustrious Danish families, the two first are those of "Rosenkrantz" and "Goldenstern."

¹ "Macbeth," performed about 1606 ; 1st ed., the folio of 1623 ; source : Holinshed. The interpretation given by some to a passage in the notes of Dr. Forman (who attended a performance in 1611), and according to which Macbeth and Banquo would have ridden on to the stage on horseback, is inadmissible. The passage has not that meaning, and the disposition of the stage scarcely allowed of such an exhibition. Halliwell-Phillipps, moreover, one of the commentators who believe in the riding, says, in his "*Outlines*," at one place, that both personages arrived "on horseback," and in another that they arrived mounted "most probably on hobby-horses." . . . They were in reality on foot, exactly like the horsemen whom Shakespeare, in "Henry V.," excuses himself for showing without their horses :

Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them.

("Chorus.")

The accession of James I. had given a present interest to the subject. Banquo, the king's ancestor, and the witches were frequently introduced into the compliments addressed to the sovereign. See, *e.g.*, the speech in Latin verse by Doctor Gynne, August, 1603 (Nichols, "*Progresses . . . of James I.*," vol. i. p. 545).

The legend of the moving forest is very old, and belongs to various countries ; it is to be found in the story of the Frankish Queen, Fredegunde. The idea of the hand that cannot be cleansed is in Spenser, book ii. canto vii.

a night shriek"; his imagination and thought proceed by quick bounds, but his will is slow and weak; he is therefore unbalanced. The evil genius who conducts human affairs, according to the Shakespeare of that period, gives to Macbeth for crime what he had refused to Hamlet for his work of justice: a will outside of himself which shall decide in his stead, poison what remains in him of "the milk of human kindness," master his nerves and put his muscles in motion. The witches have shaken but not determined him:

We will proceed no further in this business . . .
 . . . If we should fail! . . .

His wife compels him to act. And henceforth it is the rush to the abyss, amid terrors and remorse: "Macbeth shall sleep no more!" The fatalities of life happen to have placed beside the man solicited by crime a Lady Macbeth, and beside the man solicited by duty an Ophelia.

The model of womanly grace and virtue, queen among the radiant group of women created by Shakespeare's genius, endowed with all merits and all beauty, a real being, true to nature and yet worthy of the cloudless felicity of fairy tales, Othello's Desdemona¹ perishes in

¹ The play was performed before the King at Whitehall, November 1, 1604; 1st ed. "The Tragedy of Othello, The Moore of Venice. As it hath beene diverse times acted at the Globe and at the Black Friars, by his Majesties Servants. Written by William Shakespeare," 1622; other separate ed. 1630, 1655. Source, novel 7, decade iii., in Giraldi Cinthio's "Hecatommithi." No English translation anterior to Shakespeare's play is known, but there was one in French by Gabriel Chappuys: "Premier volume des cent excellentes nouvelles de M. Jean Baptiste Giraldy Cynthien," Paris, 1583. There was possibly a previous play on the same subject.

The secretary of a German ambassador to England notes in his diary, April 30, 1610: "S.E. alla au Globe, lieu ordinaire où l'on joue les commédies, y fut représenté l'histoire du More de Venise" (facsimiled in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," ii. p. 85).

an inevitable catastrophe, held up to scorn by the husband who kills her, a husband who was uprightness, loyalty, honour itself, and who adored her.

What is the good of life? Whence do we come, whither do we go? What mean the great deeds of illustrious men and the noble virtues of saints? Of what use are the most elevated sentiments of the purest and best among us, love of fathers for their children and of children for their parents, sacrifices of husbands and wives, tenderness, confidence, fidelity, disinterestedness, courage? The heroes of this period meditate upon these problems; the poetry with which they clothe their thoughts is of imperishable beauty; but all of them reach the same despairing conclusions:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day . . .
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

It is Macbeth who speaks thus.—“To die and go we know not where;” to visit

The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns. .

'Tis Claudio who mourns his fate, 'tis Hamlet aghast at the thought of eternal death.

When we are born, we cry, that we are come
To this great stage of fools,

says King Lear, echoing Macbeth's moan. The anguish

of the Anglo-Saxons of old reappears, so exactly the same that the words, too, are almost alike. In vain did the prior Augustine come to bring the solution of the problem ; the heroes of Shakespeare are as torn by anxieties as the distant ancestor of the year 627, who had said : " Such is the life of man ; we behold it for a short time, but what has preceded and what is to follow we know not." ¹

Shakespeare revels so much then in gloomy thoughts that it happens to him to outstep all limits ; his characters become grimacing, the contrasts are too violent, the catastrophes too horrible ; the effort to accumulate woes is too apparent, and the poet risks seeing the spectator recoil, protest, exclaim against the improbabilities, appeal to the other Shakespeare, memorable too, and whom he cannot have forgotten. Such is the case with " King Lear," ² a tragic story, in itself absurd, sanctioned how-

¹ Above, vol. I. p. 56.

² Played at Whitehall, December 26, 1606, 1st. ed. " M. William Shak-speare : his True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three Daughters. With the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam : As it was played before the Kings Majestie at Whitehall upon S. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidayes. By his Majesties servants playing usually at the Gloabe on the Bancke-side. Printed for Nathaniel Butter and . . . sold . . . at the signe of the Pide Bull," 1608, another edition same year (a wrong date, for 1619, according to Greg, *Library*, April, 1908) ; the folio of 1623 offers considerable differences. Sources : Holinshed, an old play (" The True Chronicle History of King Leir," 1605, repr. Malone Soc., 1907), and, for the story of Gloster, Sidney's " Arcadia." First told by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his " Historia Britonum," the story was narrated again by Wace (" Roman de Brut," 1836, i. p. 81), Layamon, and all chroniclers. W. Perrett has tried to show that Geoffrey's text must have been known to Shakespeare : " The Story of King Lear from G. of Monmouth to Shakespeare," Berlin, 1906 (" Palæstra," xxxv.). In the early versions of the tale, the heroine is named Cordeill, Cordila, Cordoilla. Spenser first calls her Cordelia, but he also calls her Cordeill. According to Charles Lamb, the play " cannot be acted " ; the incidents are too " painful and disgusting " ; no actor could fill the part of Lear. It has, however, been filled quite often, in England and elsewhere, with considerable success. I saw it played in Danish in Copenhagen with the greatest applause, the part of Lear being

ever by chroniclers and by tradition, which amply justifies its being put on the stage; but Shakespeare darkens the plot and the catastrophe, changing into a defeat the old sovereign's victory.¹ Lear and the competition in hyperboles upon which he makes the partition of his estates between his three daughters depend (though he had had twenty years to learn what was in their hearts);² the torturing of Gloster, who shrieks, tied to a chair, while his eyes are plucked out in our presence (Cornwall takes one in his hand, and crushes it under his heel); the sufferings endured in the midst of the storm; the madmen, semi-madmen, crazy from birth, or circumstances, or by a feint, four madmen together, shouting and gesticulating at once, singing songs on the heath, in the midst of such

taken by the actor, author and Dr. in Literature, Mantzius (1901). Gloster's torture caused, it is true, more than once, some fainting fit among the audience. All the changes of scene in the text were, without exception, respected by a means economical and quite sufficient: a mere change of the painted canvas at the back of the stage.

¹ Nothing better shows the decided tendency to gloominess which Shakespeare then felt, than this important and very dramatic modification of a plot universally accepted, and known to every one at that time. He, who so often preserves incidents very inconvenient for the natural development of his plays, found by him in clumsy old novels, makes of Lear a vanquished man, dying of grief before our eyes, whereas the king and his allies were victorious, and he died a natural death, according to all writers without exception, from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Wace, and Layamon, down to the "Mirror for Magistrates," Spenser, Holinshed, and the author of the "True Chronicle . . . of King Leir."—

So to his crowne she him restor'd againe,
In which he dyde, made ripe for death by eld,

says Spenser, "Faerie Queene," book ii. canto x.

- ² Which of you, shall we say, doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Gonneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Whereupon the two wicked daughters launch forth into the most extravagant superlatives, which is not surprising, as the extent of their lands is to be in proportion (i. 1).

a tempest as was never seen before (drench our steeples, drown their cocks, "strike flat the rotundity o' the world!"); disguises without number; an under-plot in which a traitor who has read "Othello" boldly appropriates Iago's wiles;¹ three or four corpses brought on the stage: this is too much, and in spite of the lyrical grandeur of the storm of passions and of the elements, our goodwill fails, our confidence in the guide who is leading us through the dark mazes of the human soul becomes blunted. Our conscience revolts; part of that darkness is artificial, the illusion vanishes, and such visible theatrical devices remind us that we are at the play.

The same is to be noticed in "Timon," a drama of much less account.² The magnifying of contrasts is prejudicial to truth, and dulls the interest. No one can feel much sympathy for so clumsy a benefactor of mankind, first a machine for gifts, then a machine for insults, acting automatically, as bungling as he is proud, assisting the poor only by chance and, usually, enriching the rich, encourag-

¹ To deceive Gloucester, Edmund acts the Iago-Othello-Cassio scene over again:

"If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and, by an auricular assurance, have your satisfaction. . .

"*Gloucester.* He cannot be such a monster.

"*Edmund.* Nor is not, sure." ("Lear," i. 2.)

Iago. Stand you awhile apart;

Confine yourself but in a patient list . . .

For I will make him tell the tale anew."

("Othello," iv. 1.)

² "Timon of Athens," performed about 1607-8, 1st. ed. the folio of 1623. Sources: probably a play written in 1600 and printed for the first time by the Shakespeare Society, and the story of Timon told by Plutarch in his life of Antony, and by Paynter in his "Palace of Pleasure." On the same subject, a dialogue of Lucian, "Timon, or the Misanthrope," in which figure allegorical personages as in our moralities: Poverty, Treasure. It is generally admitted (Dowden, Lee) that Shakespeare had for this play a collaborator, perhaps Wilkins. Another misanthrope seeking refuge in his own tomb had been shown by Greene in his "James IV.," 1st ed., 1598, part of Bohan.

ing the cupidity of those around him, and offering himself as plunder to all comers. Apemantus, who gives him his cue, is still further from nature; nothing but abuse issues from his mouth, the which is ever open. It is a great pity when such a personage is right, because he discredits right. The appeals to the false friends at the time of the catastrophe, and their ingenious ways of justifying their refusal to help, are excellent examples of comedy of the sour kind.

The romantic dramas of this period, that style erewhile so brilliant, and illumined by so lovely a light, seem, they too, the work of a different man. Whether they end happily, like "Measure for Measure" and "Pericles," or sadly like "Troilus and Cressida," they leave a painful impression. In "Troilus,"¹ all Chaucer's characters are debased, even

¹ Performed about 1603; 1st ed., "The famous Historie of Troilus and Cresseid. Excellently expressing the beginning of their loves, with the conceited wooing of Pandarus Prince of Licia. Written by William Shakespeare," 1609; anonymous preface stating, jocosely as it seems, that the play had never been "clapper-clawed with the palmes of the vulger," nor "sullied with the smoaky breath of the multitude"; another ed. same year. Source: a lost play by Dekker and Chettle, performed at Henslowe's, who mentions it several times in his diary, for example on April 7, 1599, with his usual arbitrary spelling, under the title of "Troyeles and creasse daye." Certain parts in Shakespeare's drama, and especially the last scenes, which are particularly poor, have been attributed to some other author, or else supposed to be taken without modification from the earlier play. In his "Rocke of Regard," a well-meaning work in verse and prose (Epistle dated 1576), G. Whetstone had a complaint of Cressida, and adverted to the popularity of the story: "The inconstancie of Cressid, is so readie in every mans mouth, as it is needelesse labour, to blase at full her abuse towards yong Troilus" (cf. above, I. 507, and, on complaints, II. 329 ff.). On an old comedy of "Troilus ex Chaucero," by Nic. Grimald, see a letter of J. W. Hales, *Athenæum* of November 22, 1902. The same subject was put on the stage by T. Heywood, in his "Iron Age" (printed 1632, performed long before), and later by Dryden, "Troilus, or Truth found too late, a Tragedy."—"I new modelled the plot," says Dryden, "threw out many unnecessary persons, improved such characters which were begun and left unfinished, as Hector, Troilus, Pandarus, and Thersites"—an improvement consisting, according to Walter Scott's just remark, in a transformation of coarseness into ribaldry.

Pandarus, hard as the task may seem. Cressida is a wily profligate, Troilus a whining babbler :

But I am weaker than a woman's tear,
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
Less valiant than the virgin in the night.

The Greeks form a herd of stupid, boastful, and ferocious monsters. Achilles comes to "peruse" Hector, "joint by joint," and choose the spot in his body—"whether there or there or there"—where he will strike. After which brag he causes him to be treacherously massacred by his soldiers when unarmed, and, Falstaff-like, claims the victory :

On, Myrmidons ; and cry you all amain,
Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain.

Shakespeare seems never to have read Chaucer's admirable version of the story ;¹ he follows an old play, and patches up, without more trouble, a plot in which nothing was to be found of what makes the charm and the worth of the unique old poem. At times his genius dozes ; he mutters mechanically as in a dream, in hollow and indistinct tones, the magic words which, the day before, in the hour of inspiration, had thrilled the audience. Repeated thus and vulgarised, they sadden ; the wonderful find becomes stale. After Romeo, Troilus speaks of "the busy day, wak'd by the lark" ; after Hamlet, he murmurs, "Words, words ! . . ."

In "Pericles,"² which is only in part by Shakespeare,

¹ W. C. Hazlitt says that Shakespeare, "of course," made use of Chaucer ("Shakespeare's Library," vol. ii.). Nothing, on the contrary, indicates it ; quite the reverse. So many really dramatic and, one might say, Shakespearian elements are found in the poem and not in the play, that their omission can only be explained by ignorance of that model : and it is besides the most honourable interpretation.

² Performed about 1608, 1st ed. "The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole Historie . . . of the said Prince. As also, The no lesse strange, and worthy

and in "Measure for Measure,"¹ the bitterness of the humour, the horror and the baseness of the scenes represented, the multiplicity of grimacing monsters, freeze instead of amusing: scenes in prisons and houses of ill-fame, ignoble dialogues between prostitutes, bawds, and their clients, between an executioner and his aid, between the same and a "dissolute prisoner" who declines to be beheaded just now; atrocious hypocrite punishing with death the authors of such actions as he himself makes his pastime of, and who is allowed to go at the end, happy and forgiven; not one sympathetic character, not even Isabella, novice at Saint Clare's nunnery, in the first act,

accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana. As it hath been . . . acted . . . at the Globe on the Bancks side. By William Shakespeare," 1609 (reprinted in fac-simile by Sidney Lee, Oxford, 1905, 4to); other ed. same year, and 1611, 1619, 1630 (two issues), 1635. Source: a very popular story, to be found in the "Gesta Romanorum," in Gower's "Confessio Amantis," in various English texts of the sixteenth century, especially in Twine's "Patterne of painefull Adventures," licensed 1576, first dated ed. 1607, a copy in the Bodleian. Gower, who plays the part of chorus, alludes, at the beginning of the play, to this popularity:

It hath been sung at festivals,
On ember-eves and holy ales;
And lords and ladies in their lives
Have read it for restoratives.

The work was, it is believed, composed with one or two collaborators (Wilkins and Rowley), Shakespeare's part mainly consisting, as it seems, in what concerns Marina's adventures. In spite of its improbabilities and its coarseness, perhaps because of those defects, which were then an attraction, it had great success. On the filiation and various versions of the incidents in the plot, see A. H. Smyth, "Shakespeare's Pericles and Apollonius of Tyre," Philadelphia, 1898, 8vo. Dowden mentions the hypothesis of a previous play.

¹ "Measure for Measure," performed about 1603, and, at all events, at court, December 26, 1604; 1st ed. the folio of 1623; source: a play by Whetstone, "The Right Excellent . . . Historie of Promos and Cassandra," dedication dated July 29, 1578. Whetstone had drawn his plot from Giraldo Cinthio's "Hecatommithi;" novel 5, decade viii; the subject was a very popular one. As usual in this period of his career, Shakespeare has represented the dark and low characters he found in his model much lower and much darker.

duchess in the last, who announces to her brother with a jest that he is to suffer death—

Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,
Intends you for his swift ambassador ;

—incredible adventures and a huge game of hide-and-seek filling the five acts of "Pericles," with another supposed death. . . . Stormy night's phantasms now take the place of midsummer night's dreams.

All Shakespeare's works of this period are gloomy ; even his historical dramas evidence this new tendency of his mind. He abandons Holinshed and the history of England, which permitted him to enliven his audience with Falstaff and Pistol, or to arouse its enthusiasm by his patriotic speeches. Plutarch now replaces the national chroniclers ; the poet reads in his pages the lives of Cæsar, Coriolanus, Antony, and draws from them three of his masterpieces. Nothing in the costumes, the details of manners, nor in what has been called local colour, is exact, but human truth is intense ; and without learning, without any archæological research, merely by putting on the stage live beings, of flesh and blood, instead of show Romans, he has come nearer to real antiquity than many dramatists and not a few historians of infinitely more reading.

Here again the meditative hero has his preference ; this is now one of the salient traits of his works. In his "Julius Cæsar,"¹ the subject of the play is not Cæsar, of which

¹ "Julius Cæsar," performed probably in 1601 ; 1st ed. the folio of 1623. Source : Plutarch, translated into English by North, from the French text of Amyot, "The lives of the noble Grecians and Romanes compared together," 1st ed. 1579, others in 1595, 1603, 1612, etc. ; and, for the idea of the speeches of Brutus and Antony, Appian, translated in 1578 : "An auncient Historie and exquisite Chronicle of the Romanes Warres." As in Shakespeare, and contrary to Plutarch, we have here, first a speech by Brutus denouncing Cæsar's ambition—"His ambition was never satiate. . . . What libertie was this when no hope coulde appeare ?"—then a speech by Antony which so inflames the multitude that they now want to kill Cæsar's murderers :

we have but a somewhat caricatural sketch, outlined with a careless hand,¹ but Brutus, pensive, weighing the pros and cons, "with himself at war," whose character is admired on trust by the multitude, his ideas being unknown to them. In the very midst of crises, he stops to meditate, consider, generalise. After Cæsar's death, he takes time to think of the tragedies that will be written on the catastrophe, as Hamlet returning from his sea voyage to kill Claudius, stops to generalise on the fate of man and of the same Cæsar. Cassius makes Brutus's figure stand out in bolder relief by contrast, he himself never seeing but one side of things, and being, therefore, always decided. He is vain and ambitious, a leveller and democrat out of sheer envy: Why such a one and not I? What is this Cæsar? Is he made of other clay than we? This god I have seen quake with fever, crying: "'Give me some drink' . . . as a sick girl" —

Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestick world,
And bear the palm alone.

Like Macbeth, Brutus has, beside him and outside of himself, a will that makes up for the deficiency of his own; he does not suspect this, he continues to weigh, meditate, compare; he is torn by uncertainty, he loses sleep: frightful and useless trouble, the problem is all solved

"And the kyllers, that fledde for their lives, they ranne and sought in every place, and that so outrageouslye, both in anger and dolour, as they kylled Cinna the tribune being in name lyke to Cynna the Pretor." The existence of several old plays on the same subject is certain, and Shakespeare perhaps made use of them.

¹ Some few sayings withal, worthy of the real Cæsar (mixed, unfortunately, with braggings worthy of Dryden's heroes); this, for instance, taken from Plutarch but made more striking:

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiants never taste of death but once. ♀ (ii. 2.)

beforehand for him, by Cassius, on whom he has no action. Rarely has Shakespeare's genius better served him; he distributes floods of life; his characters are distinct, salient, in bold relief, playing their parts in full light, without any obscurities nor improbabilities; the highest summits of art are there reached.

In this play, as in "*Coriolanus*,"¹ one of the most minutely described personages, if it can be so called, is the people. Shakespeare, who belongs to his time, not to ours, has no tenderness for the people; he depicts with great complacency their exigencies, their credulity, their ignorance, their fits of irresistible but transient ferocity, their contradictions, their violent exaggerations, everything, in fact, that history has ever reproached them with. And as history repeats itself, and as Shakespeare's knowledge of the human heart was marvellous, he seems at times to divine traits, unknown then, and which modern researches have discovered in the past; or, at other times, to describe the most tragic incidents of recent revolutions.²

On that point, from the beginning of his career to the end, Shakespeare never varied; his scornful disposition remained the same; the people who follow Jack Cade in "*Henry VI.*" are the same as those who now applaud Brutus and Antony, exile Coriolanus and proclaim Laertes king to console him for the death of his father slain by Hamlet. A speech of Cade's had roused the crowd's enthusiasm for liberty, and a speech of Clifford's its enthusiasm for the king. The same scene is repeated,

¹ "*Coriolanus*," performed about 1607-8; 1st ed. the folio of 1623; source, Plutarch, very closely followed, the very terms of North's translation reappearing in several passages of the play.

² The heads of two aristocrats, just decapitated, are brought on to the stage and the revolutionists make them kiss ("*2 Henry VI.*," iv. 7). The triumvirs draw up their proscription lists, and, from the very first minute, are on the verge of outlawing one another ("*Julius Cæsar*," iv. 1).

and everyone knows with what art, what eloquence, what matchless irony, in "Julius Cæsar." Brutus justifies Cæsar's death. The superior interest of liberty required it: "Who is there so base that would be a bondman? . . . If any, speak; for him I have offended." The people are penetrated with admiration and gratitude, their love for Brutus and liberty overflows, shouts arise: "Let him be Cæsar!" Then comes Antony's insinuating harangue; he does not want to blame anyone; nevertheless, he has some doubts as to the justice of that deed; he excites the multitude's pity by weeping before them, then their interest by speaking of Cæsar's will, which he greatly hesitates to read; finally he reads it. The people can no longer console themselves for the death of that great man. Shouts arise: "We'll . . . fire the traitor's houses. . . . Go, fetch fire. . . . Pluck down forms, windows, *any thing*."

The study is carried further yet, and always in the same pessimistic tone, in "Coriolanus." The play has but two important characters, Coriolanus and the people. Never has Shakespeare more carefully depicted the multitude nor made more manifest his opinion of it. For he has his Plutarch before his eyes; he follows his model line by line, but every trait, every hint derived from him, is darkened and soured. By psychological divination he makes the crowd stumble into inconsistencies, commit crimes, deplore them, and react exactly as it did in crises from which the poet could not derive his inspiration, since they happened only two hundred years later. He chooses, however, to see but the worst sides. Each one of the elements whence will emerge future reigns of Terror, but not the heroic defence of the native soil, are here, from the first scenes, and even the phraseology is alike:

— "You are all resolved rather to die, than to famish?"

— Resolved, resolved.

— First you know Caius Marius (Coriolanus) is chief enemy to the people?

— We know't, we know't.

— Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price."

Coriolanus has precisely the faults certain to exasperate the people; he is inordinately proud and disdainful, "a very dog to the commonalty." Nothing marks more plainly the degree of his pride than his incapacity to bear any praise: "I have done as you have done"; my wounds are "scratches with briars, scars to move laughter only"—a sham modesty which is the reverse of modesty; the truth being that no praise can be so high as to reach the level of his pride. He has, however, saved the republic by a splendid victory, and he must be rewarded. Elected consul by the senate, he has now to get the assent of the people; Shakespeare takes pleasure in showing the multitude now as foolish and vain as it was, a while ago, ferocious. The people are delighted that the fate of so considerable a personage should depend upon their voice; they will vote, but feel very satisfied with themselves for being good enough to do so. Coriolanus must pay for that favour; the multitude does not like to be treated as a multitude; the candidate must court each citizen separately. We can imagine with what good grace he will do it:

I had rather be their servant in my way,
Than sway with them in theirs.

And as to universal suffrage, he has not scorn enough for a system

where gentry, title, wisdom,
Cannot conclude, but by the yea and no
Of general ignorance.

But comply he must; he is urged to calm himself, to

assume the necessary attitude; it is but an unpleasant moment to pass, and he tries to inure himself by practising beforehand:

What must I say?—
 “I pray, sir,”—Plague upon’t! I cannot bring
 My tongue to such a pace:—“Look, sir,—my wounds!—
 I got them in my country’s service, when
 Some certain of your brethren roar’d and ran
 From the noise of our own drums.” (ii. 3.)

The tribunes of the people, anxious at the prospect of military despotism, have an easy task. They come in with their high-sounding words, the usual words :

He has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer
As traitors do
Manifest treason !
A foe to the public weal . . .
Coriolanus. Hence, old goat !

Hence, old goat !

Menenius advises delay, but he is suspected of "moderantism." "Sir," says one of the tribunes,

those cold ways,
That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous
Where the disease is violent.

And the leaders of the people continue playing their parts, inflating their voice, refusing now, with the kind of logic that is sure to take on such occasions, a regular trial :

Where is this viper,
That would depopulate the city, and
Be every man himself? . . .
He hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial
Than the severity of the public power,
Which he so sets at nought.

No delay, death at once, without more ado: "He dies to-night":

He is a disease that must be cut away.

. . . We'll hear no more.

Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence ;

Lest his infection, being of catching nature,

Spread further.

He is, however, only exiled ; 'tis better than nothing, the people rejoice : "He is gone, hoo ! hoo !" He returns as a foe, at the head of the Volsces ; the popular leaders long deny the news, and they imprison the messenger as a propagator of seditious rumours. The people are in a state of consternation ; nobody acknowledges any more having voted the banishment.

Not one favourable trait comes to relieve the darkness of this picture of popular vanity and ferocity ; not even valour before the enemy, nor the defence of the frontiers against the foreign invader ; the poet's gift is at fault, and this relentless severity betrays a prejudiced mind.¹

With "Antony and Cleopatra"² begins again the study of diseases of the will, a favourite one with the Shakespeare of this period. Antony continues the series to which belong Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear (weakness and violence of the senile age), and even Brutus (vacillations of a conscientious thinker). Antony has been marvellously endowed by nature : valiant, handsome, open-minded, full of resources, possessed, moreover, of a strong and sound will. He was not, like Hamlet, hampered from his birth by having but an average will, just sufficient for the common tasks of ordinary life, and which a great and unexpected burden would paralyse. Another agent of

¹ This is shown also by his adding to many admirable traits of nature others passing the limit of probability and changing the portrait into a caricature : "And though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will" (iv. 6).

² Performed about 1606-7, entered in the "Stationers' Registers" in 1608, in view of a publication which the troupe succeeded in preventing ; 1st ed. the folio of 1623 ; source, North's Plutarch.

destruction is at work in him, he is sensual and cannot resist the allurements of pleasure; a slow and continual decay of the body, of the nerves and of the will goes on within him:

His captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan,
To cool a gipsy's lust.

The mind remains lucid, as with Hamlet; he sees with painful certitude his increasing weakness and his shame; he exhausts himself in efforts, brief and violent, to break his chain, and he falls back lower each time, having ever present, to augment his grief, the memory of what he was and the sense of the abjection into which he has sunk. The play is but the history of his vain attempts.¹ His nerves no longer obey; he weeps easily; he takes, on the sudden, contradictory resolutions; he talks vacantly; an incurable spell attaches him to his "serpent of old Nile." His peers possess the world, and he Cleopatra.

To increase the horror of the fall, Shakespeare has made of the Egyptian a low courtesan who knows the secrets of her trade and nothing else, who speaks its language, who has neither heart, nor mind, nor intellect,

¹ In the first scene, pointing to Cleopatra, he says:

Let Rome in Tyber melt! and the wide arch
Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.

In the second scene:

These strong Egyptian fetters I must break.

He breaks but ties them again; Cleopatra

Hath nodded him to her. (iii. 6.)

nor poetry who is but flesh, and has no other instincts but those of her profession :

If you find him sad,
Say, I am dancing ; if in mirth, report
That I am sudden sick.

But, her attendant remonstrates, ought you not rather "give him way, cross him in nothing?"

—Thou teach'st, like a fool, the way to lose him,

answers the queen, a woman of experience and who knows best. She has, withal, when displeased, the brutalities of those who, like her, "trade in love"; she threatens to break the teeth of her waiting-woman, she strikes down a bearer of bad news: "Strikes him again hales him up and down," crying, "I'll unhair thy head." Antony rolls towards the abyss, his eyes open; he knows the treacheries and wiles of Cleopatra: "Triple-turned whore!" says he of his royal friend; but he is used to the poison of her carnal beauty and can no longer do without it; he dies of it. This is again a sombre drama; the lower instincts have conquered, and the tragedy closes on the abasement and destruction of a Roman hero.

VIII.

About 1610, although he was then only forty-six, and was at the height of his success, Shakespeare deemed that the hour had come to realise the dream of his life. He returned to his native town, and settled in his fine house, called "New Place." At that time his father, his mother, and his son Hamnet¹ were dead, but he still

¹ "August 11, Hamnet filius William Shakspeare." Entry of the burial, in 1596, of the poet's only son; parochial registers of Stratford; fac-simile in S. Lee's "Life," illustrated edition, 1899, p. 149. "Mr. Johannes

had his brothers Gilbert and Richard, his sister Joan, married to William Hart, hatter (who kept a shop in the house now called the "Birthplace"), his own wife, and his two daughters, Susanna and Judith.¹ With the practical good sense which the well-to-do "Mr. Shakespeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, Gent.," applied to all things, he married his daughters in his own town, to people of their own class, the eldest, in 1607, to John Hall, an honest physician who reached a certain reputation in Stratford and the surrounding country; the second, in 1616, to Thomas Quiney, a vintner, of Bridge Street, member of a family with which the Shakespeares had long had friendly intercourse. Neither of the poet's daughters seems to have received an education superior to that approved of by Molière's old Chrysale for plain citizens' daughters. Judith Shakespeare could, if need was, sign her name; but, like her grandfather, she occasionally saved herself the trouble by making a cross.

From time to time the poet would return to London. Although intending to give up the theatre entirely, and having sold his shares, he continued, nevertheless, his relations with his former troupe, went to see his friends the poets and actors, allowed himself still to be tempted by the demon of the stage, and wrote his last works.

With the exception of "Henry VIII.,"² an historical play Shakespeare, the poet's father, had been buried in 1601; Mary Arden, his mother, in 1608.

¹ John Shakespeare had had, it will be remembered, four sons: William, the great poet, 1564-1616; Gilbert, born in 1566, died in 1612 (?); Richard, born in 1574, died at Stratford in 1613; lastly, Edmund, born in 1580, who became an actor, did not attain celebrity, and died at Southwark in 1607. On the identification of Gilbert with the "Gilbertus Shakespeare" who died in 1612 (notwithstanding that the Stratford registers describe him as "adoles-cens"), and on the fact that Gilbert was *not* a mercer in London, as has often been said, see the letters of Mrs. Stopes, *Athenæum*, December 29, 1900, and her "Shakespeare's Family," 1901.

² Performed in 1613, perhaps one or two years earlier; 1st ed. the folio of 1623; source: Holinshed and, especially for the last act, Foxe's "Actes

written in collaboration and made up of ill-fitting parts, some very fine, others very clumsy, the few dramas of that final period are romantic works. The bitterness and pessimism of the poet have vanished ; the anguish and terror of the coming night are calmed ; the sun sets radiant in a tranquil autumn evening. "The Tempest," "Cymbeline," "The Winter's Tale," end in a general forgiveness and reconciliation. In "The Tempest" ¹ Prospero commands

and Monuments ;" written in collaboration, probably with Fletcher. It was during a performance of this play that broke out, in 1613, as we saw (above, p. 55), the fire that destroyed the Globe, rebuilt the following year. By an extraordinary chance no life was lost in the catastrophe, which formed the subject of a tragi-comic ballad. The fire spread :

Regarding neither Cardinall's might,
Nor yet the rugged face of Henry the eight . . .
Out runne the knightes, out runne the lordes,
And there was great adoe ;
Some lost their hattes, and some their swordes,
Then out runne Burbidge too.

Text in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," i. p. 310. Ben Jonson, in his "Execration upon Vulcan," gives a picturesque description of the place and of the event, reproaching the god for his "mad prank "

Upon the Globe, the glory of the Bank,
Which though it were the fort of the whole parish,
Flank'd with a ditch, and forc'd out of a marish,
I saw with two poor chambers taken in,
And razed ; ere thought could urge, this might have been !

¹ Performed in 1609-10 (Furnivall), 1611 (Lee), 1613 (Garnett, who restates former arguments according to which the play was written for the marriage, in that year, of the Princess Elizabeth, *Universal Review*, 1889, iii. 556). First ed. the folio of 1623 ; source : probably a novel or a lost play, the same which furnished the German, Jacob Ayrer of Nuremberg, with the subject of his "Comedia von der schönen Sidea," performed about 1595, printed in 1618 ; text and translation in Cohn, "Shakespeare in Germany," 1865 : same nobleman, adept of the arts of magic, holding in his power the son of his enemy, obliging him to pile up logs (a labour more suitable to the Lithuania of the German play than to Shakespeare's island, between Naples and Tunis), and marrying him at the end to his daughter ; rôle of the familiar demon "Runcifal der Teufel." Ed. Dorer has pointed out some resemblances between Shakespeare's plot and a Spanish novel (*Das Magazin für die*

the spirits of the air and of the waters, and gives them back their liberty ; he holds his enemies in his grasp, and pardons them ; the optimism of his daughter Miranda sheds over all the characters, even the traitors, its gentle light : " How beauteous mankind is ! " Even Caliban, the monster, who represents bestial and ferocious envy, profits at the end by this universal indulgence. The problem of the hereafter remains as obscure, but it is no longer contemplated by the poet with the same dread. To the anguish of Hamlet succeeds the resignation of Prospero :

We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

In " Cymbeline " and in " The Winter's Tale," other Demonas forgive other Othellos. A grace and elegance of thought, worthy of Marivaux, a freshness of colour recalling Watteau, withal the manners and language of the Warwickshire shepherds faithfully portrayed, make of " The Winter's Tale " a drama apart,¹ the truest pastoral

Literatur des In- und Auslandes, 1885, No. 5). This novel forms chapter iv. of the " Parte primera del libro intitulado Noches de Invierno, por Antonio de Eslava," Brussels, 1610 (Dorer mentions an ed. of 1609), and tells of the " arte magica del Rey Dardano," a dispossessed king whose daughter Serafina marries in the end the son of the usurper ; the events take place in a wonderful palace under the waters of the Adriatic. The shipwreck and sojourn in the Bermudas (the " Ile of Divels," famous for storms ; cf. Bolton, " Hypercritica," ab. 1618, III. xi., § 5) of English sailors in 1609, several relations of which were published in 1610, had excited public attention, and gave Shakespeare, who alludes to it (i. 2), the idea of a play with a shipwreck, spirits, etc.

¹ Performed in 1611 ; on May 15th of that year, Dr. Forman attended a performance of it and noted his impressions ; text of his observations in Halliwell-Phillipps, " Outlines " ; 1st ed. the folio of 1623 ; source : Greene's novel " Pandosto," otherwise " Dorastus and Fawnia " (the Florizel and Perdita of Shakespeare), 1588. On this novel, which had, especially because of its improbability, an incredible success, which was one of the first English literary works translated into French, and which furnished the French stage with the subject of two plays ; also on " Amadis de Gaule," and not a Polish chronicle, being the main source followed by

of a period which had numbered many, an even song of enchanting sweetness, modulated by the poet, who recalls to mind his distant childhood, associates with the rays of his setting sun the glimmerings of dawn, and enjoys in thought the happiness of those whose turn it is to be young: "Vivite felices!"

A certain lassitude is discernible however in these last dramas, evidenced by a larger space being reserved to the spectacular part (which drew upon the poet new jests from his friend Jonson), by the use of devices too often employed before, unexpected recognitions, disguises, oracles and prophecies, fourth and fifth feigned deaths; by more glaring improbabilities, especially in "Cymbeline," where, as in the plays of the first period, the wooden puppet, taken from the properties' store-house, mixes with characters of flesh and blood, struts about, grimaces, condemns to death: "I am sorry for thee . . . thou art dead—And thou shalt die for it. . . . Take him hence." ¹

Greene, see my Introduction to "The Winter's Tale," in Sidney Lee's ed. of Shakespeare's Works, vol. xv., New York, 1907. Schlegel has spent much ingenuity to prove that the title "Winter's Tale," suits the play perfectly: love's labour's lost! for winter has nothing to do with it; a "winter's tale" simply meant an imaginary story, invented at pleasure:

Now I remember those old women's words
Who, in my wealth, would tell me winter's tales,
And speak of spirits and ghosts,

says Marlowe's Jew of Malta (ii. 1.)—"A merry winter's tale would drive away the time trimly," says Peele's Antic ("Old Wives Tale," pr. 1595).

¹ "Cymbeline," v. 5; performed about 1609-10; 1st ed. the folio of 1623. Sources: for the so-called historical part, Holinshed; for the romantic part, a very old tale, popular in all countries, Greece included, of which a French version is famous, the "Roman de la Violette," thirteenth century (same plot in the "Comte de Poitiers," twelfth century); there is an Italian version in the "Decameron"; a (debased) English one in "Westward for Smelts," 1603? (only known ed. 1620; Percy Society, 1848). Cf. "Anglia," vols. vi. and vii., and R. Ohle, "Shakespeare's Cymbeline," 1890. A kind or prototype of the stupid and malevolent Cloten is to be found in Chettle's "Hoffman," 1602-3, character of Jerome.

Forty-two other plays have been attributed, in part or in whole, to Shake-

The poet's last years were passed at Stratford, "as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and conversation of his friends."¹ He saw his beloved grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall, grow up and enliven the family circle; he practised hospitality, collected his revenues, increased his possessions (purchasing in 1613, and letting, a house near the Blackfriars Theatre), received visits from his old London friends: Drayton, whom Shakespeare's son-in-law, Hall, affirms having cured of a fever,² and Ben Jonson. A particular mark of the consideration in which his wit and acumen

speare, without convincing proofs; none of them, at all events, of such a nature as to add any lustre to his glory. See the reprints, "Pseudo Shakesperian Plays," ed. Warnke and Proescholdt, Halle, 1883, ff., and "The Shakespeare Apocrypha," ed. Tucker Brooke, Oxford, 1908, fourteen plays in one vol. with important introduction and bibliography. The chief one of these plays is "The Two Noble Kinsmen: Presented at the Blackfriars by the Kings Majesties servants, with great applause: Written by the memorable Worthies of their time; Mr. John Fletcher, and Mr. William Shakespeare, Gent.," 1634; ed. Littledale, New Shaksp. Soc. Theseus and Hippolyta reappear in it, with another rustic feast in honour of their nuptials; and we are shown one more young lady made crazy by unrequited love, singing mad songs, crying: "Willow, willow," using coarse language and throwing herself into a lake. The plot is drawn from Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" (touching eulogy of the old poet in the prologue). On previous plays derived from the same tale, see J. W. Hales, in the *Athenæum* of November 22, 1902. "Sir Thomas More," in the same series of "Apocrypha," is interesting, not only on account of several fine scenes, but also from its existing in a MS., part of which is full of erasures, and part is a fragment of the clean copy submitted to Tilney, the licenser of plays, with his remarks and objections on the margins, the first one being signed by him in large letters, on the top of folio 3.—MS. Harl. 7368, in the British Museum.

¹ "Some Account of the Life of Mr. Shakespeare," by Nicholas Rowe, who took great pains to collect information on the famous poet and to obtain, from the best sources accessible in his day (especially from Betterton, the actor), traditions concerning him. The "Account" prefaces Rowe's ed. of Shakespeare's Works, and has been reprinted by Nichol Smith, "Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare," Glasgow, 1903.

² "Select observations on English Bodies, or cures: performed upon very eminent persons in desperate diseases. First written in Latine by Mr. John Hall, Physician, living at Stratford-upon-Avon" (translated by J. Cooke), London, 1657, 12mo.

were held came to him in 1613, when he was asked, on behalf of the Earl of Rutland, to devise, in conjunction with Burbage, an "impresa" or emblem with an appropriate motto, for the earl to bear at the tilting in Whitehall, on the King's birthday.¹ Shakespeare was to supply a proper subject and provide the words; Burbage, an artist as well as an actor, to "paint and make" the emblem. "Imprese," as has been well shown, were in immense favour at the Renaissance, the more so that their origin could be traced to the Greeks; the emblem was as the body, and the motto as the soul, of the "impresa."² The occasion was for the earl a great one, as he had only some months before succeeded his brother; the King had paid him a visit at Belvoir Castle, and this was his first tilting. Hence his appeal to Shakespeare, who received the comparatively large sum of 44s. for his pains, and Burbage as much.³ This is the last literary work of the

¹ Sidney Lee, "The Future of Shakespearean Research," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1906, p. 775.

² See G. F. Barwick's excellent essay in *The Library*, April, 1906. The most important work on the subject, in the sixteenth century, was that of Contile: "Ragionamento di Luca Contile sopra la proprieta delle Imprese con le particolari de gli Academici affidati et con le interpretationi," Pavia, 1574, fol., illustrated.

³ "To Mr. Shakespeare, in gold, about my Lord's impreso (*sic.*) xliiijs. : to Richard Burbage for paynting and making yt, in gold xliiijs." Sidney Lee, *ut supra*. Vain efforts have been made to show that possibly some other Shakespeare was in question; the association with Burbage, the fact that no other "Mr. Shakespeare," and certainly not the bit-maker mentioned by Mrs. Stopes (*Athenæum*, May 16, 1908) could have been applied to for this kind of work, the fact too that the help of the best poets was often required in such cases (as shown by the example of Marot, Jodelle and Ronsard in France), do not allow us to doubt that the Earl of Rutland exhibited on his shield the last "heire of [Shakespeare's] invention." Concerning Jodelle, see his "Recueil des Inscriptions, figures, devises et masquarades ordonnées en l'hostel de ville de Paris, le Jeudi 17. de Février, 1558," Paris, same year—a doleful account of festivities in honour of Henri II., in which Jodelle seems to have had worse mishaps than Churchyard at Norwich (above p. 13). Some of Jodelle's devices consisted in real imprese: e.g., two columns with an "H" on each, and the motto "Hoc Hercule dignæ."

great poet of which we have any trace ; it was his shortest too, as the motto of a normal "impresa" must be in no more than three words.¹ But while it was his shortest, it was not his most successful, for we have² an account of the tilting from the witty pen of Ambassador Wotton, who, after having stated that "the day fell out wet, to the disgrace of many fine plumes," declares that the two best "impreses" were "those of the two earls brothers" (the Earls of Pembroke and of Montgomery, to whom the first edition of Shakespeare's plays was to be dedicated). He mentions the Earl of Rutland, but has nothing to say of his "impresa," and only remarks that some of these "were so dark that their meaning is not yet understood ; unless perchance that were their meaning, not to be understood."³

At the beginning of 1616, unmistakable symptoms warned the poet that his end was near, and he caused a draft of his will to be prepared. Towards the last days of March he had once more the pleasure of seeing Drayton and Jonson ; he thought himself young again and as robust as formerly ; a supper which recalled those at the "Mermaid," and at which the three thought little about dieting, brought on a sudden aggravation of Shakespeare's condition.⁴ His will had to be hastily completed ; time

¹ Some such are used by the tilters in "The Partiall Law," ab. 1615-30, ed. Dobell, 1908, p. 20 : one has "a close-shut lanterne" with the words *Ardor in Occulto*. A typically perfect "impresa" was that of King Louis XIV. : the sun with the motto *Nec pluribus impar* ; of the same sort, that of Fouquet, the Superintendent of Finances, a squirrel and the words, *Quo non ascendam ?*

² As pointed out by L. Pearsall Smith, *Times*, January 3, 1906.

³ Of the tilting proper he says nothing, "my pen," he observes, "being very unfit to speak of lances." Pembroke's "impresa" was a perfectly regular one, "a small exceeding white pearl, and the words, *Solo candore valeo*." To Sir Edm. Bacon, "March the last, 1613." "Reliquiæ Wottonianæ," 1685, p. 405.

⁴ The Rev. John Ward, Rector of Stratford, notes among his memoranda, in 1662 : "Shakespear, Drayton and Ben Jhonson had a merry meeting, and

lacked to have it engrossed, and the original draft did duty for the definitive document, the last alterations being inserted between the lines.¹ One of these interlineations is famous: "Item, I gyve unto my wiefe my second best bed with the furniture." This is the sole mention made, in that solemn deed, of poor Anne Hathaway; in the draft, as first devised, she was not named at all, neither was any member of her family remembered.² All the poet's possessions were distributed among his children and their issue, his sister, and nephews; the poor of Stratford were not forgotten, nor the friends he had there: "To Mr Thomas Combe, my sword;" nor his fellow players: "To my fellowes John Hemynges, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell, xxvjs. viij*℥*. a peece to buy them ringes" (this being an interlinear addition). John and Susanna Hall were appointed his executors. Many reasons have been sought to explain the small place held by the wife. Needless to say that quantities have been found; but it is not a very good omen that every indication that has come down to us concerning Shakespeare's relations with his wife needs, in order to allow belief in a happy conjugal life, a complicated apparatus of ingenious explanations.³ Death came to the poet on Tuesday, the 23rd of April,

it seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted." The worthy ecclesiastic then addresses to himself this notable recommendation: "Remember to peruse Shakespears plays and bee versed in them, that I may not bee ignorant in that matter." Text in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," Appendix.

¹ The original is to be seen now at Somerset House, London. Text, with notes and comments, in Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines," ii. p. 169.

² Some existed, however; Elizabeth Hall (then Lady Barnard), the poet's grand-daughter, kindlier disposed towards that family, left them, by will, in 16[70], a few small legacies.

³ Anne, it is alleged by some, had a dower, but this is certainly not true, according to S. Lee, "Life," p. 274. She had, it is alleged by others, some chronic and incurable illness which rendered her incapable of managing her property; Shakespeare doubtless left her none, out of pure affection, "to relieve her from household anxieties" (Halliwell-Phillipps, "Outlines"):

1616. "No longer mourn for me," Shakespeare had written,

when I am dead,
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not
 The hand that writ it.¹

On April 25, 1616, the bell of the great church of the Holy Trinity tolled for Shakespeare and then was silent. But the trumpet of Fame still heralds his glory, ever more and more splendid. Even in the remotest corners of the world he numbers readers to-day; in his time Elizabeth translated Horace, in our time a king has translated Shakespeare.

The chancel of the old church at Stratford is filled with graves; it is the Westminster of the little town. There were already several there when Shakespeare was buried under a slab in front of the altar, at some distance from the north wall.² Other slabs, covering the remains of his wife, his daughter Susanna, and his son-in-law, the physician, surround his grave.³ On the same wall, at

this is a mere supposition, unsustained by anything we know; the widow, at all events, survived seven years. Remarkable reasons have also been found to prove that the legacy of the "second best bed," and not of the very best, was not only justifiable, but was even a delicate attention of the poet to his wife. The least that can be said is that affection would have been better denoted if the will had contained some such clause as this one: "Item all the rest of my goodes and cattles, moveable and unmoveable, my debts and legacies being charged, I give and bequeathe to my wel beloved wiefe Marie" (will of John Marston, June 17, 1634).

¹ Sonnet lxxi.

² Such is the tradition. The slab bears no name, but only verses which can apply to any one, and of which the author is unknown; its place is rather singular, being neither in the centre of the choir nor near the wall where the cenotaph was to be erected. The tradition is, however, credible, being supported, as early as 1656, by such a conscientious authority as Dugdale.

³ Shakespeare's wife died seven years after him, in 1623; his son-in-law, John Hall, in 1635; his daughter Susanna in 1649. His other daughter,

five feet from the ground, was placed, shortly after his death, a cenotaph of stone and marble, painted and gilded, surmounted by two angels and a coat of arms, such, in fact, as was suitable for a man of wealth and importance like the deceased. In the central niche, between two columns, a half-length statue of painted stone represents the poet, writing, his hands resting on a green and red cushion.¹ This, with the engraving in the 1623 folio, is the only authentic portrait of the great dramatist.² The engraving, probably done from an older painting,³ represents the poet younger and thinner; the stone image figures the man of the later years, heavier, the cheeks fuller, the neck short and thick. In both portraits the

Judith Quiney, who had had three sons, whom she survived, died, also in Stratford, in 166[2]. Elizabeth Hall, the poet's grand-daughter, who, being then Lady Barnard, died in 16[70], left no children. The house in Henley Street, now called the "Birthplace," then passed to Thomas Hart, grandson of the poet's sister Joan, and remained in the family till the first part of the nineteenth century; it is now, as before said, public property. "New Place" was first rebuilt, then razed to the ground in the eighteenth century; the foundations and a well alone subsist, protected from relic-hunters by a railing.

¹ The head was apparently modelled from a death-mask: see Furnivall, and Munro, "Shakespeare," 1908, p. 202. The earliest engraving representing Shakespeare's monument is in Dugdale's "Antiquities of Warwickshire," 1656, p. 520; it is not very accurate, showing as it does a lean, full-bearded Shakespeare, with his two hands lying idle on a cushion. As a kind of post-script to his lengthy description of Stratford, Dugdale adds: "One thing more, in reference to this antient town, is observable, that it gave birth and sepulchre to our late famous poet Will. Shakespere," p. 523.

² The engraving is the work of the Fleming, Martin Droeshout, aged twenty-two then. The tomb is by Gerard Janssen, a Dutchman settled in Southwark; an allusion in one of the poems prefixed to the folio of 1623 shows that the monument already existed at that date. Two Latin lines engraved beneath the bust, and the author of which was evidently of classical dispositions, attribute to the poet, in a strange medley, the wisdom of Nestor, the genius of Socrates, and the art of Virgil. Neither of the two portraits has, from an artistic point of view, any merit.

³ And which it is even believed by some has been found. Mr. Sidney Lee gives a reproduction of it as a frontispiece to his "Life." There remains cause for serious doubt.

eyes are large and their gaze direct, the moustaches are upturned, the cheeks clean shaven; the forehead is remarkably high, especially in the engraving; brown curls shade the ears, but the top of the head is entirely devoid of hair. Such perfect baldness cannot be achieved in a day, and Shakespeare's probably commenced early; his facetious praise of that little infirmity in the "Comedy of Errors" is just what one might expect from a writer with a brow prematurely denuded: to be hairy is "a blessing that [Time] bestows on beasts: and what he hath scanted men in hair, he hath given them in wit." Bald heads have many other advantages: the hairless man does not risk dropping hairs "in his porridge;" he saves the money that others spend "in trimming,"¹ etc.

On the poet's tombstone a curse, which has thus far deterred the boldest, warns off any who would trouble his ashes in their repose. Thus he sleeps in his native town, in the church of his baptism, near the friendly river, not far from the fields where he had often seen the spring heralded by "daffodils that come before the swallow dares."

¹ Shakespeare may, it is true, have derived hints, even as to this, from somebody else; see: "A Paradoxe proving by reason and example, that Baldnesse is much better than bushie haire, etc. Written by . . . Synesius bishop of Thebes . . . Englished by Abraham Fleming," London, 1579.—"Creatures having outward haire, it is to them insted of outward goodes; in place of the mind." Sig. cj.

CHAPTER VII.

SHAKESPEARE, HIS DRAMATIC WORK.

I.

THE classical system and the Shakespearian one are not merely different, they are opposed ; one is the counterpart, the reverse of the other. One simplifies, selects, harmonises tints carefully chosen and few in number ; the other complicates, accumulates, delights in the resplendence of multi-coloured sights. Reserve, sobriety, measure are the ideal of the one ; the preference of the other goes to violent contrasts, to unbridled passions, to the inaccessible, the abject, the incommensurable. One clips its yews in geometric shapes, the other adds brambles to its landscapes to make them appear more wild. The windows of Versailles look out straight ahead ; English bay windows, projecting and many-sided, open their panes in all directions.¹ We must restrain and master ourselves, thinks the classic, select subjects afar off in time or space, so as to be able to treat them with more dignity and self-possession. We must loosen all bonds, thinks the Elizabethan

¹ A peculiarity already noted by French travellers in the seventeenth century. Windows, "par toute l'Angleterre . . . s'avancent en forme de balcon ou en demi cercle." This allows one to discover "ce qui est à côté dans les rues, au lieu que nous ne voyons par les nôtres que ce qui est au devant de nous."—S. de Sorbière, "Relation d'un Voyage en Angleterre," Cologne, 1666, p. 20 (1st ed. 1664).

dramatist, pass all limits, natural or arbitrary, of time, place, propriety, and likelihood ; we must interest, excite, stir up, and all means will be good for that end, our public enjoys extremes, we will take care not to offer it what could not please. We will treat, preferably, subjects as near to it as possible, and when the subjects are distant, the thoughts and costumes, at least, shall be English and modern.

Ce qu'on ne doit point voir, qu'un récit nous l'expose,

Boileau has said. But, thought Londoners, what should not be seen is precisely what interests us most. The indecent, the horrible to contemplate, the impossible to show, that is exactly what the public in theatres clamours for. It will be indulgent to the means, provided the intention be there ; if "three rusty swords" are all that is available to figure "York and Lancaster's long jars," as Jonson ironically wrote, it will not haggle about the number, and will be grateful to an author who has endeavoured to represent the battle of Bosworth. The interior of one of those ill-famed houses neighbouring the theatres is, of all things, what "should not be exhibited" ; but as such a sight will be for this unrefined public a great amusement and a source of laughter, it shall be offered to view, and the realism will even be carried to the last degree. The pulleys creak, and too visible ropes suspend in the air the throne on which Jupiter is seated ; the spectators will not laugh with Jonson, but will applaud Shakespeare, who shows what cannot be seen in Fleet street nor elsewhere. A ridiculous poet, the grotesque character in a French play, reveals as follows his dramatic ideal :

Trois voyages sur mer, les combats d'une guerre,
Un roi mort de regret que l'on a mis en terre,

Un retour au pays, l'appareil d'un tombeau,
 Les états assemblés pour faire un roi nouveau,
 Et la princesse en deuil qui les y vient surprendre . . .
 Voudrez-vous perdre un seul de ces riches objets ?¹

At these words the Parisian public, under Louis XIII., burst out laughing ; but the London public would not have laughed ; they would have said : It is "Hamlet," or something like it.

On one point alone French and English authors were in accord : the great rule is to please, thought Shakespeare, Corneille, and Molière alike. "Je voudrais bien savoir si la grande règle de toutes les règles n'est pas de plaire," said Molière ; but to please in Paris in the seventeenth century one had to be simple, and to please in London in the sixteenth one had to be complicated. Artists of the greatest genius having conscientiously applied, in both countries, each his own method, the results have been so utterly dissimilar that hardly even now, after so many years, are the dramatic masterpieces of the one country accepted in their entirety, as masterpieces absolute, in the other.²

In the classical play, few characters, one single hero, centre of the drama and attracting all eyes, as the "Grand Monarque" is the centre of the kingdom ; and even if the hero actually resembles the "Grand Monarque," all the better :

Que Racine, enfantant des miracles nouveaux,
 De ses héros sur lui forme tous ses tableaux—

an ominous piece of advice from Boileau to his friend. In the classical drama, one event, one day, one place.

¹ Saint Sorlin, "Les Visionnaires," ii. 4.

² On this different evolution of the two theatres and the resistance of a group of independents in France and a group of classics in England, see "Shakespeare in France under the Ancien Régime," chap. ii. and Epilogue.

Time, place, characters, all is simplified, reduced to essentials.

In the Shakespearian play, it is just the reverse : not one event, but a succession of events, that will sometimes lead to a final catastrophe, sometimes not ; instead of a crisis a story, and a complex story, with its origins, its developments, its incidents and ramifications, at times even several stories. There is no question of twenty-four hours ; the periods of time are short or long as occasion demands : four hours in "The Tempest," sixteen years in "The Winter's Tale" ; changes of place occur in every act and every scene ; all Europe serves as theatre for the action ; journeys are so rapid, from one end of the map to the other, that the characters sometimes exchange compliments on their quickness :

The swiftest harts have posted you by land,
And winds of all the corners kiss'd your sails
To make your vessel nimble.¹

It is the method of the old Mysteries that still survives : "Now, gentyll marraner . . . help me ower the se."—We are arrived, "her is the lond of Mercylle" (Marseilles).² And this variability and these changes accord so well with English taste that, in the very midst of the classical period, the king of letters, Samuel Johnson, declared that, in Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra," the "power of delighting is derived principally from the frequent changes of the scene."³

Shakespeare requires a whole host of characters : thirty-nine in "Richard III.," forty in "Henry V.," while Racine has seven in "Britannicus" and eight in "Phèdre." These

¹ "Cymbeline," ii. 4.

² "Digby Mysteries," ed. Furnivall, pp. 125, 127 ; above, vol. I. p. 473.

³ "General Observations on the Plays of Shakespeare" ; Works, ed. Murphy, 1806, vol. ii. p. 215.

characters of the Shakespearian drama are not only numerous, they are of a variety as great as in real life, and even more so, for the poet includes in his lists supernatural beings, fairies, spirits, ghosts, witches, monsters. By the side of kings, princes and archbishops, figure peasants, maniacs, clowns, drunkards, several dogs and a bear. "The peasant or the drunkard," La Bruyère wrote, "supplies some scene to a farce writer. . . . Such characters, people say, are natural ; thus, by such a rule, a whole audience will soon be offered the sight of a valet who whistles, a sick man in his privy, a drunkard who sleeps or vomits. Is there anything more natural?"

Such irony would have been incomprehensible to Elizabethan dramatists, and to Shakespeare in particular ; the extreme examples imagined by La Bruyère as being the height of the monstrous and of the impossible, seemed to them, as he says, quite "natural." They judged them, besides, to be advantageous and profitable, as furnishing opportunities for contrasts and strong effects, keeping alive the attention of the audience.

The mind of the brawny-sinewed, square-shouldered spectators was somewhat sluggish ; they came full of goodwill, ready to admire, but they had eaten and drunk a good deal before coming ; they ate and drank again at the theatre. It was important to prevent their falling asleep ; it would have been difficult to fix their attention long on subtle nuances. They had to be roused now and then from their torpor by the report of cannon, and when they were well awake, then was the time for sweet music, spring breezes and the nightingale's song. Hence that quantity of means employed to amuse and divert : comic interludes, shows to please the eyes, practical jokes and mystifications (of such infallible effect that the characters in the play explain them beforehand, dream of them at night, go into ecstasies of admiration when they

are performed, and themselves give, from the very stage, the signal for applause),¹ madmen, peasants, clowns, ridiculous constables (that old established tradition which still survives in Christmas pantomimes), innumerable songs to utilise some actor's fine voice,² magic and masquerading, characters disguised as Russians, dances of shepherds and satyrs, mythological apparitions, "Egyptian bacchanals" danced hand in hand by Antony, Pompey and Octavius, all of them half inebriated, noises of all sorts, music suave or violent,³ chimes, alarums, drums, trumpets, discharges of artillery. The English, noted Hentzner in his diary, delight extremely in noises which fill the ears: "Delectantur valde sonitibus qui aures implent."⁴

The scene with the masters was constantly duplicated by the scene with the servants. The practice was extremely convenient, its use was incessant; we find it in "Coriolanus" as in "Romeo," in "Antony and Cleopatra" as in "The Winter's Tale." The servants explain their masters; they are an occasion for striking contrasts; such opportunities should never be lost. When the dramatist, therefore, allows himself to handle those eminently "natural" characters, far from leaving in the shade their "natural" traits, he makes them as conspicuous as he can; vulgar beings are vulgarised still more, while noble ones are ennobled, great ones are aggrandised and lesser ones diminished. This method is familiar to Shakespeare; he applies it to his landscapes (cliffs of Dover, raging sea at Elsinore) and likewise to his heroes; he shows the great through magnifying glasses, so that they appear colossal,

¹ "O, 'twill be admirable.—Sport royal, I warrant you. . . . For this night, to bed and dream on the event."—"Twelfth Night," ii. 3.

² "By my troth, well met: Come, sit, sit, and a song."—"As you like it," v. 3.

³ All take hands.

Make battery to our ears with the loud musick.

("Antony," ii. 7.)

⁴ "Itinerarium," Nuremberg, 1612, p. 156.

and reverses his telescope to make us look at the lesser ones, so that they seem infusoria. Side by side will go Imogens or Mirandas, of a gentleness, and Clotens or Calibans, of a wickedness, equally superhuman. "Harlot," "bawd" and "clown" will be worse than the worst reality. Confronting a Prince Henry, slight as a sylph, rises a Hotspur, strong as an oak, and, for effect, contrarily to history, the sylph will strike down the oak.¹ All the children destined to a tragic end, first delight the spectator by their roguish grace, and render thus more awful the blackness of the traitors and executioners.² To a Helena, all white, is opposed a Bertram so sombre that Boccaccio would be unable to recognise him. This case is characteristic, for the aggravation is undoubtedly deliberate; Shakespeare, usually so faithful to the plots he borrows, here makes an exception; he allots to Bertram supplementary treasons and crimes, in order to render the contrast more violent: dazzling white opposed to black absolute.³ And, sure enough, the contrast is so strong that it leaves us anxious as to how, the play over and our couple married, will come about "the concord of this discord." But that point has, for the poet, less importance, and his chief need is a good contrast. Imogen, being all innocence, stretches, of her own accord, her neck to the assassin: "The lamb entreats the butcher." When all hearts go out to her, her virtue

¹ "You starveling, you elf skin . . . you tailor's yard, you sheath," says Falstaff, "1 Henry IV.," ii. 4. At the battle of Shrewsbury, Shakespeare makes the young prince slay Hotspur and put Douglas to flight; both exploits are of his invention (v. 4).

² In "King John," "Richard III.," "Macbeth," "Winter's Tale."

³ At the very end of the play, having seduced, as he thinks, young Diana, who in reality has remained pure, he publicly declares, out of cowardice, to avoid the king's displeasure, and knowing that he is uttering an atrocious lie, that the young girl was "a common gamester to the camp," and sold herself "at market price" ("All's Well," v. 3). Nothing of the sort in Boccaccio, nor in Paynter, who translated this tale into English and whom Shakespeare follows.

being proclaimed, she still receives a blow which fells her to the ground, without any other motive than to make her fate even more touching. Hector is shown all honour in opposition to Achilles all cowardice ; Arthur reminds his jailer, who handles the red-hot iron with which to put out his eyes, how he used formerly, in gentlest fashion, to cure his headaches.¹

Between these extremes that form a sort of ornamental framework, a considerable space remains reserved to real nature, to everyday life, to exact observation, to delicate nuances. When Shakespeare enlarges or diminishes his characters, it is because he chooses to and seeks to please—to please contemporaries, Englishmen of the sixteenth century. No one had received from heaven a clearer vision of men and things, with a better faculty of representing them as they really were. But he needed enormous contrasts for his scenic effects, and it was for the stage that he was writing. Hence what attracts us in him, and also what startles and repels ; what is of all time and what is only of his day. No one can truly understand him who does not keep in mind his epoch, and the cravings he had to satisfy.

The fondness for those violent oppositions, universal before the Renaissance, attenuated in countries where the revival of classicism spread the sense of proportion, had been conspicuous formerly in the authors of *Mysteries* and in the tellers of "Patient Grissel" tales ; it was to survive in England among the writers of novels of the "Old Curiosity Shop" type.² Among neo-classics, nothing of

¹ When your head did but ache,
I knit my handkerchief about your brows. . . .
. . . I will sit as quiet as a lamb,
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,
Nor look upon the iron angerly.

("K. John," iv. 1.)

² Rôles of Quilp and Nelly ; all hearts were, in 1840, penetrated with emotion : "The many friends it won me, and the many hearts it turned to me when they were full of sorrow. . . ." (Dickens's Preface).

the sort ; they prefer to tone down rather than exaggerate contrasts ; secondary characters, the nurse, the attendant, the faithful servant, are raised to the dignity of their masters, or very nearly ; they use a language as refined, their vocabulary is as chastened ; they are full of respect for their betters, and for the colonnades beneath which they speak ; they think, as did the French Academy of their day, that one should exclude from one's language terms too old, too new, or too technical, terms of anger or which might wound modesty : "They have not been admitted into the Dictionary because well-bred people avoid using them in their discourse."¹

To be admitted into a tragedy was like being admitted at court ; one must be of noble birth or at least of noble speech. Into such dramas there entered only noble expressions and dignified nurses. Racine exposed himself to severe censure for having ventured to use the word "dog"—"*des chiens dévorants*"—in a tragedy. But Shakespeare risked no such criticisms, and above all did not care in the least about those that some refiner of language might have been tempted to utter when he made an old gentleman of illustrious house address his daughter as : "You green-sickness carrion !" In these words is Juliet spoken to by her father. Juliet's nurse has but little in common with *Ænone*.² Macbeth's porter is the living realisation of La Bruyère's nightmare : privy and the rest, nothing is lacking ; he figures not in a farce, but in a gloomy tragedy, at the gloomiest moment, for contrast, and a most impressive one it is. He is, be it said, copied from life or nearly so.³

¹ "On ne les a point admis dans le Dictionnaire parce que les honnêtes gens évitent de les employer dans leurs discours."—"Dictionnaire de l'Académie," preface to the 1st ed., 1694.

² In Racine's "*Phèdre*."

³ See what Dekker says on the churlishness of the London gate-keepers, 1606 ; above, vol. II. p. 295.

Far from reforming the tastes of the multitude on this point, or on any other, Shakespeare endeavoured, on the contrary, to satisfy them, and none succeeded in this better than he, none having his genius. Instead of reacting, of directing, of instructing, he rather confirmed the crowd in its dispositions; he furnished it in abundance with its favourite dishes, feeding, surfeiting, gorging it to such an extent that he ended by helping unawares towards the birth of different tastes, those of his day being satisfied to the point of satiety, those appetites being dead.

Shakespeare never purposely looks beyond the desires of his audience. Why take that trouble for plays which he will never print? Why seek to reform a public that will not be in the least grateful, quite the contrary, and why run the risk of failure for the honour of art?

↓ Let dictatorial Jonson 'entertain such fancies, nothing better; he finds pleasure in it; the joy of despising the ignorant crowd will console him for everything else; he is one of those who, like Molière's Alceste, will cheerfully lose "vingt mille francs" if that gives them the

↑ right to grumble "pour vingt mille francs." But people whose dream of life is not to reform Parnassus, but to dwell, like wealthy citizens, in their native Stratfords, do not attempt to stem such strong currents; and then those currents flow past many delightful spots which can be beautified still more; and when the question is of a Shakespeare, a self-made author, possessing chiefly natural gifts (the most marvellous that a poet ever received), no wonder if he proves quite naturally of his own country, his own nation, his own time, if he thinks with the majority, writes for it, follows currents already formed, and thereby triumphs on the stage.

That there were in erudite books learned dissertations on rules and "principles," allowing studious writers to compose plays that might have pleased ancient Romans,

Shakespeare did not ignore. The existence of rules was notorious; his comrade Jonson had nothing else in mind, and more than once the Mermaid tavern must have heard the eloquent chider defend his favourite ideas on the adaptation of antique literary laws to the needs of the modern stage. The effect on Shakespeare was practically nil. He barely, on one single occasion, lets us understand that, although writing himself in the most highly coloured romantic style, he was not incapable of appreciating a classic play, a tragedy on the siege of Troy or the misfortunes of Dido, embellished with noble and sonorous speeches, without jokes to divert, nor "sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury," one of those plays that pleased critics, but not the crowd: "It was never acted; or if it was, not above once, for the play, I remember, pleased not the million . . . but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgments, in such matters, cried in the top of mine) an excellent play. . . . One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido."¹ As for writing dramas of this sort, that was another affair, the affair again of Jonson, who, in spite of his concessions to the multitude, never attracted any but a meagre public to

¹ Some modern commentators, embarrassed by this inconvenient admiration, and who picture to themselves, consciously or not, Shakespeare as an idolater of his own plays, have alleged that the praise was ironical, and that Hamlet quotes, out of mockery, the verses which follow (a recital in grandiloquent verse, after the neo-classical manner). It is certainly an error; Hamlet is sincere, speaks seriously, and as his remarks have nothing to do with the drama of which he is the hero, one can find for them no other motive save a fancy of the poet to express, for once, a personal appreciation, the outcome, doubtless, not of his own natural disposition, but of the tuition received at school or ingathered in his conversations with learned friends. It is easy to furnish proof and counter-proof of this; the recital admired by Hamlet is disapproved of by *Polonius*:

"*Polonius*. This is too long.

"*Hamlet*. It shall to the barber's with your beard.—'Pr'ythee, say on:—He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps."

Otherwise said, he has the low tastes of the "million" (*Hamlet*, ii. 2).

his tragedies, or of Daniel, who could not even have his performed. Their fate was a warning.

In all questions of art and style, Shakespeare acted in the same fashion. His natural tendencies had usually the same bent as the crowd's. When they were different, he sacrificed them; and the sacrifice was made so completely and so willingly that, but for a trifle, it would pass unperceived. That trifle is some remark, an ironical sally, a discreet word of blame, buried in the dialogue, which may reveal his private thoughts, and disclose an ideal in art differing sensibly, on some points, from his practice. He made fun of plays where everyone dies at the end,¹ but as the crowd enjoyed that kind, he wrote several such; of those in which the clown interrupts the gravest discourses by his drolleries,² and his own clowns are as indiscreet as any; of dramas encumbered with too many puns and "tricksy words,"³ too many practical jokes and mystifications,⁴ and all that kind of encumbrance is constantly found in his plays. He recommends observing measure and taking more heed of the "judicious" than of a whole theatre-full of ordinary folks,⁵ but what ordinary folks like is rarely far from his thoughts.

¹ "When the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed."—"Midsummer," v. 2.

² "Though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous."—"Hamlet," iii. 2.

³ And I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. ("Merchant," iii. 5.)

"How every fool can play upon the word!" he says again (*ibid.*).

⁴ "If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction."—"Twelfth Night," iii. 4.

⁵ Hamlet to the actors: "Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others" (iii. 2).

To take as a guide the many, was to take a guide leading one to all sorts of places, having an unbounded curiosity, gifted with a roving imagination, and at the same time with a robust faith that would not easily decry anything as improbable; absolutely indifferent, moreover, to accuracy historical, geographical, or chronological. Shakespeare follows this guide and sometimes outstrips him; knowing his desires he anticipates them; he rises higher than his spectator had dreamed, shows him more abjectness than he had ever seen, slaughters more people than in the only too real massacres of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, adding sometimes, at the end of his dramas, supplementary deaths, quite useless as regards the play, or else the news of the death of some of the characters long since disappeared from the stage, and quite forgotten: merely to add to the number, and to *embellish*.

He avails himself too of every advantage that his public gives him. He is no less indifferent than his spectators to dates, geography, and historic truth. He scarcely ever corrects a mistake, be it a glaring one, found in the wretched pamphlet whence he derives his plot; he even adds some from absent-mindedness, carelessness, or from having read wrong. Many incoherences are due to the rapidity of composition. At one place Hamlet is slight, elegant, very young, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form";¹ at another he is "fat and scant of breath."² Some time after Laertes' departure for France, he declares that he has "foregone all

¹ III. 1. He alludes himself to his slimness, saying of his uncle that he is

No more like my father,
Than I to Hercules (i. 2).

² V. 2: an allusion probably, such as Shakespeare often makes, to the physical appearance of the actor, Burbage in this case, who played the part of Hamlet.

custom of exercises"; further on, alluding to his intended fencing bout with the same Laertes, he says: "Since he went into France, I have been in continual practice."¹ The faithful Adam, who plays an important part at the beginning of "As you like it," is forgotten at the end. Viola decides to present herself at court as a eunuch, and this peculiarity is never heard of again through all the remainder of "Twelfth Night." Autolycus exchanges clothes with Florizel and finds himself clad as "a great courtier"; but Florizel at that moment was himself clad as a shepherd: *dormitat Wilhelmus*.

In a few very rare cases, the historical errors are deliberate, and introduced in order to augment the picturesqueness: thus Shakespeare borrows from Holinshed the traits with which he composes his picture of Duncan's murder by Macbeth; but in Holinshed the description did not apply to Duncan but to Duff, killed by Donwald. The wonderful story of the Roman army, stopped and vanquished, thanks to three peasants, is taken from the same chronicler; but in Holinshed the battle was between Scots and Danes, and not, as in "Cymbeline," between Britons and Romans: the transference is voluntary. Usually, however, errors, even in English history and the best known, are the result of mere absent-mindedness, of too hasty reading, or of the careless adoption of such facts as were found in the old play used as a groundwork. Some anonymous playwright having associated the valiant knight, Sir John Oldcastle, with the jolly companions of the future Henry V., Shakespeare, according to his wont, took this for granted, and, without discussing or verifying, heightened the colours and perfected the picture on the same lines, for the delight of all times. A protest from the family caused the name of Oldcastle to be sup-

¹ II. 2; v. 2.

pressed and replaced, with an excuse in the epilogue, by the ever-famous name of Falstaff.¹ In "King John," the scenes follow each other according to a very unusual chronology; at one moment we are in 1202, at the next scene in 1212, then again in 1202, then in 1200. In one single scene are united the events of 1201, 1204 and 1212. The Duke of Austria, one of the characters in the drama, was dead long before the date at which it begins; but Shakespeare had found him in the old play that he followed, and kept him, just as he kept, and even augmented, the premature artillery of the Kings of France and of England. In "Richard II." and "Henry IV.," children of eight and ten figure as a full-grown woman and as a redoubtable warrior. In "Henry VI.," Joan of Arc captures Rouen. In "Richard II.," Bolingbroke's crusade is attributed to his enemy Norfolk, who, moreover, dies in the play much earlier than in history. In "Richard III.," the Duke of Clarence dies seven years too soon: Shakespeare was not so far removed from the date of that event as we are from the French Revolution.

Same indifference as regards local colour; progress since the Middle Ages is nil; the poet's unconcern is

¹ "Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man."—Epilogue of "2 Henry IV." The author of the "Famous Victories of Henry the fifth," 1598, who furnished Shakespeare with his plot, had represented Oldcastle as one of the prince's dissolute companions, but the portrait is merely sketched. On the prince saying that, if his father died, all would be kings, Oldcastle replies: "Hee is a good olde man, God take him to his mercy the sooner"; which, being said in jest, is not very wicked. One quite understands how the family, who had let this pass unnoticed, protested when Shakespeare had made of the personage a portrait full of life, applauded by all, but of a sort that could but be offensive to his relatives. (A play was subsequently written in his honour by Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathaway, "Sir John Oldcastle," pr. 1600, Malone Soc., 1908.) The name was changed; but, by mistake, the prince still calls Falstaff once, in Shakespeare's play, "My old lad of the castle" ("1 H. IV.," i. 2). The Shakespearian personage having been popular from the start, was quoted several times, under his old name, even after he had been rebaptized (e.g. in 1618, "Centurie of Prayse," p. 65).

absolute; if by chance some attempt in that line can be detected in his plays, it rarely improves matters: Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Italians, address each other as "Signor" and "Monsieur" in "Cymbeline," the scene of which is laid four hundred years before the Franks settled in Gaul. In "Hamlet," the Danish usurper calls his Swiss guard: "Where are my Switzers?" Shakespeare's Romans, his Greeks and his Trojans play cards, top and billiards, break spears for the honour of their ladies, turn down the corners of pages in their books—"Is not the leaf turned down, where I left reading?" says Brutus—they brandish their scimitars, quote Galen six centuries before his birth, have the alternative of dying at the "Tarpeian rock" or being broken "on the wheel," wear hose and doublets, nightgowns and nightcaps, say grace at their meals and threaten each other with their pistols. In "Winter's Tale," the hero consults the oracle at "sacred Delphos" at a time when heretics were being burned, when a king of Sicily married the Emperor of Russia's daughter, when puritans sang "psalms to hornpipes," and "that rare master Julio Romano" made himself famous by painting stone statues in oils: as were painted those on English tombstones in Shakespeare's time, as his own statue was one day to be painted in Holy Trinity Church at Stratford. In "King Lear," the Britons of before Christ play cards, wear spectacles, plant cocks on their steeples, and fight very early Frenchmen, who have a marshal called "Monsieur Le Fer."

Same unconcern as regards geography. For Shakespeare it is a general rule that all distant towns are by the sea shore. Let that pass for the fancy Bohemia of "Winter's Tale"; but the best known cities, Rome, Padua, Mantua, Verona, Florence, Milan are also by the sea. To start on their journey from Verona to Milan his personages wait for the tide;¹ Mantua is north of

¹ "The tide is now" ("Two Gentlemen," ii. 2). "Away, ass, you will lose the tide" (ibid. ii. 3).

Milan, Padua is in Lombardy; from Padua to Pisa, the usual way is by sea.¹ To go from Roussillon in France to "St. Jaques le Grand," that is to say St. James of Compostella in Spain, Helena goes by Florence, the usual port of embarkation, we are given to understand, for French pilgrims.² In the forest of Arden, in France, grow palm-trees and olive-trees, beneath which lions fight snakes.³ Delphos is an island.⁴ His indifference equals that of mediæval romance writers, one of whom places Beaucaire by the seaside, on the border of a forest full of lions.⁵ Interested solely in the play of passions, writing in a fever, having studied little and travelled not at all, Shakespeare would not have stretched out his hand to take down a map or a chronicle from a shelf, in order to ascertain the position of a town or the date of a death or of a battle.

Elsinore is a characteristic example. Those who like to picture to themselves a Shakespeare letting his thoughts ripen slowly, weighing his words and verifying his facts,

¹ "Taming," i. 1, iv. 2.

² *Widow.* God save you, pilgrim! Whither are you bound?

Helena. To St. Jaques le Grand.

Where do the palmers lodge, I beseech you?

Widow. At the Saint Francis here, beside the port.

You came I think from France?

Helena. I did so. ("All's well," iii. 5.)

Like Boccaccio, Paynter, whom Shakespeare follows, had spoken of a pilgrimage, but the specific mention of St. James is an addition of the dramatist's. St. James was one of the three most famous places of pilgrimage, the road to it being known of all: "Trois principal sièges sont devant tous les autres sièges du monde: Roume, Compostelle et Éphèse, si comme nostre sire establi devant tous les apostles Saint Pierre, Saint Jacques et Saint Jehan, à qui il révéla ses secrez."—"Pseudo Turpin," in Bédier, "Les Légendes épiques," Paris, 1908, i. 337.

³ "As you like it," iii. 2, 5; iv. 3.

⁴ "Fertile the isle" ("Winter's Tale," iii. 1); confusion being made, as it seems, between Delphos and Delos.

⁵ Such is the geography of the author of "Aucassin et Nicolette," above vol. I. p. 227.

have wondered how he could have given, in "Hamlet," such a correct idea of that town and of the Danish realm. They have found very good explanations: fellow players of the poet had visited the country and performed in the very castle where the plot is laid, which is quite true. But in reality there is no need to wonder how the poet was so precise, for the good reason that he was not. The instance is a truly typical one, since, in this case, he could, without any trouble, have got accurate information, but he did not care to. The low flat shore about the castle becomes in his play,

. . . The dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,

so abrupt and steep that many, for merely looking down and hearing the "roar" of the waves below (and from this he draws a great dramatic effect), have become deranged in their mind. Few seas are, on the contrary, more habitually quiet and silent. He pictures to himself, on the west, a range of mountains that the island of Sjælland has never known;¹ between the castle and the harbour, which in reality are contiguous, he inserts a plain where Hamlet meets the army of Fortinbras.²

Improbabilities were, we have seen, a means of pleasing. Shakespeare often has recourse to them, to such an extent even, that he sometimes happens to fear he may have gone too far: "Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad makers cannot be able to express it."³ But this scruple is quite exceptional, and on that point, it must be said in his defence, not only that the public encouraged him, but that realities, so to speak, did the same. Firstly, it may be observed that, considering things

¹ The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch . . . (iv. 1).

² IV. 4.

³ "Winter's Tale," v. 2.

in their true light, the most ordinary lives are, time and again, filled with improbabilities ; two brothers, two lovers, a husband and wife, tenderly united, come to detest each other, and why ? For nothing, for so little that one cannot believe it : it is improbable and true at the same time. But of much more importance it is to note how, in that period, the great public events, of far-reaching consequences, happened with such suddenness and were so contrary to reason, probability, and expectation as to justify on the stage every temerity. It was so in all countries, but especially in England, and foreigners noticed it : " Now," writes one of them in 1558, " the English will love a prince ; turn your hand, they will want to kill and crucify him." ¹ Under the names of Oxford and Knyvet, the Montagues and the Capulets fought and slew each other in Shakespeare's time, and Queen Elizabeth had to play between them the part of the Duke of Verona. Under the name of Bothwell, Macbeth cried treason before the body of his own victim ; under the name of the same Bothwell, Claudius married the widow of the first Hamlet, killed by himself. Shall we wonder at the sudden impeachment of Hermione in " Winter's Tale " ? No one wondered at it in London, where everybody remembered the trial and execution of Anne Boleyn, the Queen's own mother. And the heroines disguised as pages, the masters disguised as servants ? . . . But Mary Stuart had disguised herself as a page ; Melville had almost persuaded Elizabeth to do the same ; James V. had visited France giving himself out as the squire of his favourite, John Tennant ; Elizabeth Southwell, daughter of Sir Robert Southwell, had followed Leicester's son, Robert Dudley, disguised as his page, becoming first his mistress, then his wife. The counterfeit letters and counter-

¹ Perlin, " *Description des Royaulmes d'Angleterre et d'Écosse*," Paris, 1558.

feit seals used by Hamlet to destroy the companions of his sea journey were among the methods of government of the period, and they were employed with so much art that, to this day, no agreement has been possible as to what is true and what is false in the famous "casket letters." People believed in sorcerers and witches, for they still burned them, and in ghosts and apparitions. The great scholar, the promoter of experimental knowledge, Bacon, speaks of apparitions as an averred fact. In a fit of fury, Hamlet, half-crazed, finding some one is concealed behind the arras, traverses it with his sword, to kill whosoever was there. Would one like to know what precedent in real life Shakespeare might have quoted? This one: "The many evil plots and designs have overcome all her Highness' sweet temper. She walks much in her privy chamber, and stamps with her feet at ill news, and thrusts her rusty sword at times into the arras in great rage. . . . The dangers are over, and yet she always keeps a sword by her table." Essex's rebellion had just been quelled and the favourite put to death.¹

On the stage, according to Boileau, when reality seems unreal, the dramatist must explain the mystery of it, and not leave the spectator face to face with improbable and, apparently, incoherent events. With the logical-minded French this rule was admitted without demur. Had he known of it, Shakespeare would not even have discussed it: why encumber oneself with these justifications, since one can succeed and please without them? The only obligation, in London, is to make people know your intent, and this plain task is not such an easy one, after all, with a mixed and noisy public; to justify and connect, to show events to be probable, is useless, especially if the characters are historic,

¹ Letter of Sir John Harington to Sir Hugh Portman, October 9, 1601; "*Nugæ Antiquæ*," 1804, vol. i. p. 318.

or nearly so ; the spectators have no right to speak, they would be answered : It is history. And the figure of King John turns on its pivot, patriot king and national hero, then all of a sudden cowardly assassin and traitor to the interests of his country. The change, it is true, would be far better graduated if it were a question of Othello, but then Othello does not belong to history. Had not Boileau said, besides, to justify his rule :

L'esprit n'est point ému de ce qu'il ne croit pas ?

“The mind is not stirred by what it does not believe.” Well, thought the London playwrights, our public asks for no more than we offer. It believes, and is stirred.

To please is the only rule. The great dramatist follows it to its extreme consequences, the best and the worst. His lyrical outbursts, his deep remarks inspired by a divine genius, his thoughts, of which several will occur later to Pascal and be expressed in almost the same terms,¹ that knowledge of human anguish and human tenderness which he can condense into one line so perfect and so pregnant that a whole book could not teach more, delight the multitude, traverse the thick layers of its vulgarity, penetrate to the heart and illumine it, as a flash of lightning cleaves the clouds. To our greater advantage, the poet happily multiplies those splendid passages ; incomparable ones are to be found even in the least of his plays. But, averse to restraint, unable to hold himself in check, “lacking arte,” as Jonson said, he puts them sometimes in the best possible place, sometimes in the worst ; he can neither wait nor correct ; his fireworks rise to the heavens or hang fire in a ditch. He furnishes the queen in “Cymbeline” with an admirable eulogy of her country

¹ “Love’s reason is without reason” (“Cymbeline,” v. 2)—“Le cœur a des raisons que la raison ne connaît point” (“Pensées”).

and of British courage, and the queen is the dark character and one of the traitors of the play.¹ He has an exquisite description of the little princes in the Tower,

Girdling one another
Within their alabaster innocent arms :
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,
Which, in their summer beauty, kiss'd each other.

And this description is attributed to the low brutes who have murdered them.² At the sight of bleeding combatants, the Severn,

Affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank.

These lines are attributed to fiery Hotspur, but it is in reality the poet of "Venus and Adonis" who speaks through his mouth.³

Bad taste, like improbabilities, was a way of pleasing. What is commonly called bad taste, the English multitude of that day, as we know, called wit. They could appreciate the real wit that abounds in Shakespearian plays, but sham wit too had a keen charm for them, and they felt very grateful to authors who gave them that enjoyment. Far-fetched similes were deemed happy finds. Shakespeare offered them plenteously; it was for him a way of resting and enlivening the audience, of relaxing its nerves; it would more readily return to the sombre and the tragic after this interlude. Not to speak of stray examples scattered here and there, he thus introduced whole scenes filled with quibbles, verbal jugglings, and plays on words, which sent the public into ecstasies: "Look, he's winding up the watch

¹ Act iii. sc. 1.

² "Richard III.," iv. 3.

³ "1 Henry IV.," i. 3.

of his wit, by and by it will strike"; thereupon the shipwrecked princes and lords of "The Tempest" exchange facetious remarks, "merry fooling," endlessly, to fill the time, awaiting the events¹—as the Celts of Britain had done time out of mind: a passage written by Giraldus Cambrensis four hundred years before reads like a prophetic description of this very scene.²

The liking for "disputoisons," dear to the Middle Ages, had not died out; it reappears here and there in Shakespeare's dramas, as lively as ever, to such an extent even that the poet supplies unawares, on one occasion, a parallel to the famous fabliau of the "Jongleur d'Ely."³ The characters of the plays are themselves rapturous over these conceits; they may pretend, at times, to think there are too many of them: "Well, your old vice still, mistake the word;"⁴ but they persist, for, in reality, the public never found it had too much. Witticisms, quirks and quibbles, or merely conundrums and puns, were they even bad ones, always delighted it, at whatever moment: one cannot, it thought, have too much wit. And Shakespeare, by nature little enough

¹ Act ii. sc. i.

² "Facetiam in sermone plurimam observant; dum vel sales vel lædoria, nunc levi nunc mordaci, sub æquivocationis vel amphibolæ nebula, relatione diversa, transpositione verborum et trajectione, subtiles et dicaces emittunt."—Above, vol. I. p. 10.

³ Encounter between a serious personage and a pseudo-simpleton, who gets the better of the former: "Friend! you! pray you a word: Do not you follow the young lord Paris?"—*Servant*: "Ay, sir, when he goes before me," etc. ("Troilus," iii. 1). Cf. "Jongleur d'Ely":

Ou qy estes vus, sire Joglour? . .

Sire, je su ou mon seignour,

etc. (To whom do you belong, Mr. Juggler?—Sire, I belong to my master). On this fabliau of the thirteenth century and on disputoisons or debates, preparing the way for comedy, see above, vol. I. p. 442. A real disputoisson (the defence of spring and of winter by a cuckoo and an owl) ends "Love's Labour's Lost."

⁴ "Two Gentlemen," iii. 1.

disposed to select his occasions, lent his wit to his various characters, even on their death-bed : King John, John of Gaunt, Henry IV. die, a pun on their lips,¹ and the poet's only concession to sober taste is to make one of the bystanders remark :

Can sick men play so nicely with their names ?

As to suppressing these embellishments, there could be no question of that. Romeo's death inspires the Prince of Verona with punning remarks,² and Antony's death has the same effect on Cleopatra. In that again, truth to say, Shakespeare, before all a man of his times, could invoke precedents drawn from real life : condemned by an iniquitous judgment, the puritan John Stubbe, on the scaffold, made a pun at the moment when the executioner was about to cut off his hand.³

In the end, however, the abuse engendered some lassitude, even in the public ; during the latter part of his career, the poet was far more chary of this verbal jugglery than during the first. But to the last he retained some of his partiality for those far-fetched similes and elaborate conceits, beloved for a while by

¹ *Gaunt*. O, how that name befits my composition !
Old Gaunt, indeed ; and gaunt in being old, etc.

Eleven lines are devoted to playing on this word, after which the dying man takes up others :

Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.

(“ Richard II.,” ii. 1.) Coleridge defends this scene and considers that there is nothing unnatural in these puns at such a moment.—“ Lectures,” ed. Ashe, 1902, p. 150.

² Addressed to old Montague :

Thou art early up,
To see thy son and heir more early down.

³ “ Praye for me, nowe my calamitie is at hande,” November 3, 1579, in Sir John Harington, “ *Nugæ Antiquæ*,” 1804, i. p. 154.

the French "Précieux" and execrated by Boileau. A dagger which, its work done, "en rougit, le traître," seemed to the legislator of the French Parnassus the acme of bad taste. What would he have said, had he read Shakespeare, whose daggers, not content with blushing, are "unmannerly breech'd with gore"?¹ Cæsar turns pale,

His coward lips did from their colour fly.²

At his death, his blood seemed :

As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no.³

Cordelia seemed to be

A queen
Over her passion ; who, most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.⁴

To make them speak in flowery language, the more meritorious in the eyes of the public if the more unexpected, was one of the signs of Shakespeare's fondness for certain of his characters. In this he scarcely changed throughout his career. The red-hot iron is about to put out Arthur's eyes, but, happily, the fire "is dead with grief"—

The breath of Heaven hath blown his spirit out,
And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.

If the executioner revives the flame, the instrument of torture will "glow with shame."⁵ These pretty ways of speaking, and many others of the same sort, are allotted to the victim : it was a means of making him interest-

¹ "Macbeth," ii. 3.

² "Julius Cæsar," i. 2.

³ III. 2.

⁴ "King Lear," iv. 3.

⁵ "King John," iv. 1.

ing and of winning hearts for him, an infallible method which the poet employed for his favourites, from Juliet, at the opening of his career, to Miranda at its close,¹ not forgetting Prince Henry, who causes his old father to admire the ingenuity of his involved discourses and thus obtains the forgiveness of the dying man whose crown he had prematurely appropriated²: Thou hast pleaded "so wisely in excuse of it." All this, for the frequenters of the Globe, was wit; they were in a flurry of excitement, they quivered with delight, they were grateful to the author and to the stage heroes who procured them such refined pleasures. Let us observe, besides, that on this point, too, Shakespeare had the excuse that language of this sort was not, in his day, as unreal and impossible as it seems to us; he found models of conceits on the lips of Elizabeth, even in the Queen's messages to Parliament;³ he surpassed these examples because, on the stage, one must give more relief to realities, and he knew that his public would be obliged to him for so doing; obeying the wishes of the audience, he expended treasures of ingenuity in *out-elizabething* Elizabeth.

¹ *Miranda*. The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. ("Tempest," i. 2.)

² Accursing it, I put it on my head;
To try with it,—as with an enemy,
That had before my face murder'd my father,—
The quarrel of a true inheritor.

("2 Henry IV.," iv. 4.)

³ See, for instance, her affected reply to Parliament, which had demanded of her the head of "Mary . . . commonly called the Queen of Scots." She ends: "And thus I must deliver you an answer—answerless" (Prothero, "Select Statutes," 1894, p. 111). When Monsieur left her, she refused to return to Greenwich by water: How can you propose, she said, "que les vents et les eaux qui ont emmené Monsieur d'avec moy me meinent, et que j'entre dans des vaisseaux qui me l'ont ravy?"—"Mémoires du Duc de Nevers," 1665, i. p. 560.

Shakespeare has but one master, his public; he is its faithful servant, and neglects none of its whims. When he writes a drama, he cares nothing for critics or essayists, nor for the verdict of learned noblemen. It was not Southamptons who would fill his theatre: for all such he had written his "Venus"; to the many he addresses his plays. He shows only kindness to them; he rewards them for their applause by delicate attentions; not only does he offer them the dishes they prefer, with their favourite spices, but he wants their mind to be at ease, he wants them to be pleased with themselves, and then they will infallibly be pleased with their poet too. He lavishes explanations, forewarnings, recapitulations, interpretations, not at all, to be sure, to increase the likelihood, for on that point they never complained, but that they should well know what the matter was, that they should not mistake one character for another, the impenitent thief for the penitent one.¹—"Thebes," Sidney said, "written in great letters upon an olde doore," informed the spectators where they were.—All Shakespeare's complicated characters have, morally, their qualification inscribed on their breast and on their back; they constantly point to it: It is I who am the traitor, the impenitent thief;² it is I who am the murderer; the misdeed you have just witnessed, it is I who contrived it; the one you are going to wit-

¹ As they occasionally did: an amusing satire of the ordinary playgoer who unconsciously mistakes the purport of a drama and bestows his interest on the wrong personage, is to be found in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle," acted ab. 1606-7: characters of the merchant and his wife; all the good wishes of the latter go to the ridiculous Humphreys. She is withal a good public, and quivers from head to foot as though the adventures were real: "I tremble (as they say) as 'twere an aspen leaf."

² This method, be it said, was consecrated by custom. First lines of the rôle of Ateukin, the traitor in Greene's "James IV.":

And now is my time by wiles and words to rise.

ness will also be mine, and this is how I intend to go to work.—*Traitor* “in great letters” on the actor’s breast! Richard III., Iago, Edmund in “*Lear*,” the queen in “*Cymbeline*,” never weary of recalling that they are the villains of the play. I must be, says Lady Macbeth, in the first scene in which she appears, “from the crown to the toe, top-full of direst cruelty.” “I am determined to prove a villain,” declares Richard III. in the monologue by which he opens the play, “I am subtle, false and treacherous;”

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.
The secret mischiefs that I set abroad,
I lay unto the grievous charge of others,

says he further on; he is in a word, he tells us, “like the formal Vice Iniquity.” Iago, being less known, takes far more pains; he never tires of repeating: I am a traitor; what I am going to say is the contrary of what I think; Othello will believe it, but don’t you do the same; I am an atrocious rascal. Not one of his movements, even the most insignificant, but is announced beforehand; it is, at times, as if one heard the play twice; he first foretells the scene, then plays it:

Now, ’mongst this flock of drunkards,
Am I to put our Cassio in some action
That may offend the isle:—But here they come . . .
Some wine, ho! [*Sings. . . . Wine brought in.*]¹

In “*Much Ado about Nothing*,” the feint at the window is explained to us twice before, and once after, the event. Reversely to Iago, Pisanio, in “*Cymbeline*,” explains to the audience that he is *not* the traitor

¹ II. 3; see also, *e.g.*, the scene with Cassio when Iago makes him laugh by talking to him of Bianca, iv. 1.

and that they must make no mistake.¹ It matters little that the explanations should, at times, be improbable, provided they be clear; Prince Hal, at the beginning of "Henry IV.," gives an interpretation of his character very unlikely but very clear, and that is all that was needed.²

Seeing these precautions and this ceaseless managing, the modern reader is tempted to exclaim: But what a stupid public that poor great man had! No, not stupid, but ignorant, and, above all, unwilling to take the slightest trouble, and very thankful to the poet for placing, here and there, unmistakable sign-posts to help them to find their way in case they should have been absent-minded, should have thought of something else, slept as sometimes happened, talked with a fair neighbour, or peeled an apple. Shakespeare was full of attentions for them; very different in this again from Jonson, who took pleasure in handling his people roughly: let us see if

You, that have so grac'd monsters, may like men.³

The hearers were ill-pleased with Jonson and with themselves. They were afraid they were really block-heads; they returned to Shakespeare's plays, certain of hearing marvels, and of understanding everything into the bargain, by the favour of an artist who had no other thought than to please them, who subordinated his

¹ . . . To prove false, which I will never be (iii. 5).

² He declares that his "loose behaviour" is but a stratagem, and that, when the time comes, he will "throw it off," and rule as a model prince: this is clear. He adds that his motive is that:

My reformation glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes,

as the sun dazzles more strongly when it emerges from clouds: the explanation of his conduct is not very plausible.—"1 Henry IV.," i. 2.

³ Prologue to "Every Man in his Humour."

tastes to theirs and never paid them any unflattering compliments.

II.

One of the qualities that Shakespeare received from nature overshadows all his other gifts, and makes us understand how, despite the changes of time, of schools, of literary ideals, despite an accompaniment of enormous defects (he did nothing by halves), his fame, in all lands, should have gone on increasing. It so happens that the quality usually the rarest is, in him, the predominant one: more than any poet, of any time, he is a life-giver. At his creating breath, the dead leave their graves, heroes win their victories, lovers whisper in tones so soft that the beloved one must lend her ear to perceive them, in accents so penetrating that our heart is still moved by them. He draws from the dust of chronicles or stray pamphlets, from the stores of stage properties, from fairyland, from the dim recesses behind the scenes, the nothing, the abstract idea, the clumsy sketch, the wooden puppet, the coarse clay out of which he will fashion his character; and behold, the individual springs from his hands, lives, moves, speaks, is crowned with myrtle or laurel, or sinks into an irretrievable catastrophe. Erstwhile a puppet, now a man of flesh and blood, whose eye flashes and whose heart beats, the Shakespearian personage follows his destiny through light and darkness, traversing the anguish, the terrors, and the joys that we know or that await us; puppet a minute ago, now our brother. Sometimes, it is true, while the play goes on, the heart stops, the hand becomes dry and hard again, and the wooden doll reappears: the poet is thinking of something else, his genius slumbers; he gives life and takes it away.

But it is rarely absent from his pages for long ; while the live being, by a whim of the Muse, becomes a doll once more, and moves its creaking limbs by jerks, life reappears elsewhere, around it, above, below : for this marvellous gift of Shakespeare's is with him of universal application. His dramas being, by the absence of rules, open to all humanity, every sample of the human race figures in them, all equally living. He succeeds as perfectly in depicting Hotspur who is all action, as Hamlet who is all dreams, Lady Macbeth who is but ambition, and Imogen who is but gentleness, Falstaff the "fat-witted" knight, and Jaques the pale dreamer. If he introduces a dog into his play, that dog will have life and individuality, will be one dog in particular and no other, will have a disposition and manners quite as personal as Brutus, Hotspur, or Macbeth. The poet's thoughts roam the world ; he sees, divines, or imagines life everywhere, in plants, in the clouds, at the bottom of the sea ;¹ he notices the martlets' "pendent beds," built in the battlements of Inverness ; he listens to the "drowsy hums" of the "shard-borne beetle" at nightfall ; he whispers a tale : "yond' crickets shall not hear it ;"² he has seen the little fairies of the shore pace "the sands with printless foot," and the little fairies of the glade model mushrooms at midnight ;³ he stops to hear the wind whistle and the hour strike, to listen to the song of the waves, to see the sun sink to rest, and to contemplate distant sights "undistinguishable,"

Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.⁴

¹ Clarence's dream : fantastic picture (life and death amid sunken wrecks and treasures), as rich in hues as a water-colour by Gustave Moreau, in "Richard III.," i. 4.

² "Macbeth," i. 6, iii. 2 ; "Winter's Tale," ii. 1 ; more crickets, "Cymbeline," ii. 2 ; "Macbeth," ii. 2.

³ "Tempest," v. 1 ; "Ye elves of hills," etc., partly imitated from Ovid.

⁴ "Midsummer," iv. 1.

A nurse, a porter, a pedlar, a boatswain, a page, appear in their reality, specialised, having their own interests quite apart from the hero's, insisting upon talking to us of their own affairs, which often have nothing to do with the play. But then they are not "*dramatis personæ*," they are persons in real life. Shakespeare does not dictate their words, but lets them speak; they often abuse the permission; they know the evocation will be brief and that their "little life" upon the stage will be still shorter than the short lives of real men; they pour out their hearts and explain their case so fully, with such spirit, that they are an encumbrance and that the development of the play will be slackened, if not impeded. It is one of the inconveniences of the method. It happens to Shakespeare to allow each one to explain and defend himself so well that we no longer know where we are going, nor whom we should love. Wanting too much to have the individual understood, he risks our losing the thread of the drama. To make an end, then, he removes his hand, and the personage, a lifeless pack of wood and wires, collapses behind the scenes. Or, again, he leads him off all alive and we shall see him no more, or he kills him. Shylock, so Jewish, and who has so eloquently defended his Jewishness, falls back at the end, a Christian puppet, into the chest of stage properties. King John talks so well at the beginning of the play that we fail to understand how he behaves so badly at the end. Bertram gives so frankly such good reasons that it is hard to blame him, at the commencement of "*All's well*," for refusing the hand of Helena; between Henry IV., a murderer, and Richard II., a weakling, both eloquent and claiming, in admirable lines, one the crown, the other our pity, our heart hesitates and does not know whether to side with Bolingbroke or his victim. Richard, treading English soil, on his return

from Ireland, expresses himself with a tenderness and emotion fit to win him the sympathy of his compatriots for all time :

I weep for joy . . .
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand . . .
As a long parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles, in meeting :
So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth.¹

Yet it is to Richard's enemy that the poet wanted in reality our sympathy to go. It is difficult, whatever one may do, to compose a drama absolutely clear while showing humanity such a mixture as it often is of good and evil, and so troubled by conflicting passions. Classic art, which selects and simplifies, here regains its advantages.

Taking literally the pleadings which had struck them most, various critics have been pleased to attribute to Shakespeare himself the ideas of his characters ; they have made him a friend of the Jews because of Shylock, a favourer of Catholicism because of Catherine of Aragon, hostile to distinctions between natural and legitimate children because of Edmund, and so on. They say nothing of opposite pleas, which, on that score, would allow one to attribute to the poet the most contrary opinions, and to see in him a friend of liberty because of Brutus, an enemy of the people because of Jack Cade ; a superstitious believer in ghosts because of Hamlet, a sceptic scoffing at them because of Hotspur. The cases in which may be perceived, without possibility of doubt, Shakespeare's personal views are in reality very rare : they occur when the personage, diverging from the subject and from his rôle, emits opinions which have nothing to do with the play ; or, again when the same

¹ III. 2.

appreciation is reiterated in various works with a frequency showing a strong prepossession and a firmly-rooted idea. When Hamlet complains of the competition, ruinous for adult comedians, of the child players "of the city," Shakespeare certainly uses him here as his mouth-piece. When the dramatist repeats, over and over again, always with enraptured pleasure, the praise of his native land,

This precious stone set in the silver sea,¹

or the praise of music, or the dispraise of the multitude, or the satire of those water-flies with many-coloured wings, fluttering about, as busy as if they knew why, courtiers, followers of the great, brilliant depositaries of the secrets of etiquette, aides-de-camp who have never aided any one, obsequious and ceremonious sayers of nothings, he certainly expresses what he thinks, and reveals to us his own sentiments.² But these cases are rare. As a rule he is a true creator: with life, he gives

¹ "Richard II.," ii. 1.

² For instance, Osric in "Hamlet," or, better still, the courtier so well described by Hotspur:

When I was dry with rage, and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat and trimly dress'd . . .
He was perfumed like a milliner . . .
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me, etc. ("1 Henry IV.," i. 3.)

The poet's personality appears again in the allusions he lets slip, now and then, to contemporary events or whimsicalities (but he is very chary of them in comparison with other dramatists, Jonson for example); allusions to remote or near-by countries, "Othello," i. 3, "As you like it," iv. 1, "Taming," Induction; to fashions, "Macbeth," ii. 3, "Twelfth Night," i. 3; to piratical expeditions, "Measure," i. 2; to new-coined words, "Twelfth Night," iii. 1; to love-sick youths poetically inclined, "As you like it," iii. 2; to the supposed punning armorial bearings of the Lucy family, "Merry Wives," i. 1; to Essex's expedition to Ireland, "Henry V.," chorus of act v.; to the glory of Elizabeth, "Midsummer," ii. 2; or that of James I., "Macbeth," iv. 1.

his personages independence ; they have their free will ; they talk as they please, and are alone responsible for their opinions.

III.

Considering in our mind the whole series of Shakespeare's dramas, it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that this life-giving faculty is the great poet's dominant virtue, that which, together with his lyricism, captivates us most strongly. His dramatic power, carried so far in his masterpieces, the art of constructing a play and of conducting it, without a flaw, to an inevitable termination, are unsurpassed, but are with him of less common occurrence. The life-giving power accompanies him much more constantly. Even in his most hastily composed plays, those in which the dramatic art proper is weakest, in which the various parts, ill-joined, are fastened one to the other by big nails visible from a distance, suddenly a tremor of life is felt, and, just as we were about to revolt, to protest against a puppet-show, behold, the magician emerges from his torpor, life circulates, and the wooden doll of a moment ago now utters words that no ages can ever forget.¹

In the masterpieces, the dramatic power is incomparable. In a few very rare cases, "Othello," for instance, it remains such throughout ; generally, however, it keeps to the highest level during only a portion of the work. That which Shakespeare found in his model, often the most execrable scribbler, teller of tales, or patcher of plays, he would take as it was, especially if the plot happened to be

¹ Example : to Ulysses, a mere puppet through most of the play, is given the famous line :

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

("Troilus," iii. 3.)

filled, stuffed, and overloaded with surprises and improbabilities. Thus received from another's hand, they were for him guaranteed facts, accepted and consecrated; there was a precedent; such facts would pass muster on the stage; if they failed with readers, so much the worse for the readers; he did not write for them, and it was not his fault if piratical booksellers published his dramas.

As to the choice of matter, no one was less fastidious. Shakespeare takes his, literally, from the first comer. For a playwright, the first comer is another playwright; out of thirty-seven plays by Shakespeare, twenty at least, and probably more, are founded on other plays. The rest are drawn from novels, ballads, or popular books. In his historical dramas, he follows either old plays or Holinshed; he takes the best known events, the legends familiar to the multitude, those which dramas, poems, tales, songs, woodcuts had made known to all: histories of King John, of Richard II., of brave Talbot, of the victor of Agincourt, of the crimes of Richard III. "Thise olde gentil Britons" celebrated by Chaucer, the subjects of innumerable romances, popular yet in legend and history, are represented by *Cymbeline* and *King Lear*. The Saxon ancestor, the great vanquished of 1066, he with whom the Englishmen of to-day connect themselves the most willingly, hero of fewer legends, less popular, considered less interesting, is totally absent from Shakespeare's stage.¹ Plutarch's

¹ Spenser, who takes, however, the precaution to make his St. George descend "from ancient race of Saxon Kings" (*"Faerie Queene,"* book i. canto x), though he represents him as one of the companions of Arthur, places in the library of Alma's castle a book of "*Breton monuments*" whose contents he sums up, and this allows him to versify the story of *King Lear*, *Cymbeline* and Celtic England (book ii. cantos ix and x). But the Anglo-Saxon period of the national past does not inspire him either; Harold was in fact a usurper in his eyes: ". . . The unjust and tyrannous rule of Harold an usurper" (*"Veue of Ireland"*). Sir Thomas Elyot does not show more tenderness for the Anglo-Saxon ancestors who, he says, conquered the land by treachery: "After that the Saxons, by treason, had expelled from Englande the Britons" (*"Gouvernour,"* ed. Croft, i. 22).

biographies supply the plot of the Roman plays; they are devoted to the most universally known personages, Coriolanus, Cæsar, Brutus, Augustus, Antony, Cleopatra.

Placed before the narrative, the novel, or the dramatic sketch which serves him as a groundwork, Shakespeare inclines, as a rule, to keep the plot intact, unless indeed it be too simple. He complicates and blackens the one furnished him by Whetstone, and from which he draws "Measure for Measure"; he doubles, in his "Comedy of Errors," the mistakes in "Menæchmi," the model supplied by Plautus being too plain; he adds to the principal intrigue in "Lear" an accessory one which he takes from Sidney's "Arcadia." He supplements with a by-plot, in "All's well," the main intrigue, borrowed by him from Paynter.¹ He accepts without hesitation, and faithfully respects, the double story on which turns the "Merchant of Venice"; he would rather, as we can see by the example of "Lear," have added the second one, had it been lacking, than, finding it in his model, have suppressed it. Some very rare accounts of his plays, by contemporary spectators, have come down to us. They confirm what we have gathered elsewhere of the importance of incidents and surprises as a means of pleasing the public. One of these accounts is by a lawyer, three others are by a physician, that is, by spectators very superior to the average. They nevertheless note down nothing but the incidents and surprises of the plots: mystifications ("good practise") of "Twelfth Night"; ferocious plans of Leontes, oracle of Apollo, trickeries of Autolycus in "Winter's Tale," without a word on the exquisite country idyl which gives the play its true charm; Iachimo in his chest and apparent death of "Innogen" in "Cymbeline"; witches, murders and ghosts in "Macbeth," nothing on the

¹ Story of Lafeu and of "fair Maudlin," whom Bertram would have liked to marry.

tragedy of ambition and remorse enacted in the assassin's heart.¹

As a rule, Shakespeare adopts what he finds in his models, without effacing the incoherences of their narratives. A number of the plays whence he drew his inspiration are lost; but from those which remain we can judge of how he dealt with his originals. The respect for events, whatever they be, is extraordinary. In "*Taming of the Shrew*," the model play is followed almost scene for scene. In "*King John*," the buffooneries in the last pages of the original (loves of monks and nuns) are, it is true, suppressed; but the display of bombastic patriotism so crude as to make the history an impossible one, the hero's sudden change in the middle of the play, the gross anachronisms, are all preserved. In the pretended view of King John's "*troublesome raigne*," traced by the earlier playwright, not a word was said of that, to him apparently insignificant event, the granting of Magna Charta; neither is there one in Shakespeare, who stuck to his text and was not going to spend time in supplementary reading for the purpose of filling any historical gaps.

In "*Romeo*," the simple, striking, very dramatic idea of awakening Juliet before Romeo dies, and of letting the lovers exchange a last farewell, occurred to a Garrick who realised it on the stage with the most durable success. It did not occur to Shakespeare, who contented himself with following his immediate model. Had he had the time, and taken the trouble, to verify and compare, to go back to the sources, he would not have left it to his future interpreter to reinvent an incident which was already in Luigi da Porto's novel, in Groto's play, and in Bandello's text.²

¹ Notes of Manningham, 160[2], "*Diary*," Camden Soc., p. 18, and of Dr. Forman, 1610-11, in Halliwell-Phillipps, "*Outlines*," 1898, vol. ii. p. 85.

² "*Romeo la donna viva sentendo . . . disse: Non mi conoscete o dolce*

When Duncan's murder is discovered, Macbeth attributes the crime to the victim's servants, found in his room sleeping soundly: he slays and leaves them there. How can he and his wife be content with a stratagem so clumsy, and which proclaims their own guilt? Who will believe that the assassins, their crime accomplished, would have fallen asleep on the spot? But this stratagem is in the book; Holinshed had related it, in connection with the murder of a different king to be sure, but that did not matter; there was a precedent. Creeping plants, with exquisite flowers, seek what they may cling to, and, according to chance, twist their tendrils around a log on the ground, or drape the walls of a cottage, or wreath the cornice of a church or of a palace. So did Shakespeare entwine with poetry ruins and brambles, temples and fortresses, hovels and sanctuaries.

When the original furnishes only brief hints, Shakespeare develops them on the lines indicated by the text; but carrying as a rule, in accordance with his method, the sombre characters to black absolute, the virtuous to perfection, the great to measureless magnitude, so as to augment the effects and contrasts dear to the crowd. Julius Cæsar, who makes, at best, but an indifferent figure in Plutarch, makes a very poor one in Shakespeare; the lines drawn by the biographer are preserved but deepened, so much so that the portrait borders on caricature and the great man becomes almost a comedy character. Coriolanus is blunt in Plutarch, brutal in Shakespeare. Lear with his competition of hyperboles, is already, as we have

donna mia? . . .”—“*La Giulietta*,” in “*Rime e Prosa*,” by Luigi da Porto, Venice, 1539, fol. 36. So too, in Groto's play (above, p. 196), the hero, suddenly perceiving that his dead friend still lives, exclaims:

O Dio, che sento? sento pur nel petto
 Batterle il core e parmi che si mova,
 E ch'è spiri Hadriana, che è cotesto? (v. 5.)

seen, hard enough to accept. Shakespeare not only accepts him, but makes him more exacting and more crazy than in the old play he was following.¹

If the plot selected is good, the masterpiece is complete ; it is a marvel without equal. If the plot selected is defective and contains improbabilities, incoherences or contradictions, it remains defective in Shakespeare, and the defects that he corrects are usually of small consequence, compared with those he preserves. But then appear, in their might and splendour, his other qualities : his lyric warmth, his life-giving power ; they shine with such radiancy that the crannies and spots can scarcely be perceived ; the edges of huge dark crevices are united, not by a bridge, nor even a plank, but by a ray of light : it is enough to lead across the abyss the spectator's gaze. The type of a play of this sort is "Hamlet."

The original is a lost drama, probably by Kyd ; it had met with success, which commended it to Shakespeare's choice. There cannot be any doubt that, as in the case of "King John" the original of which we possess, he followed its plot very closely, keeping all its incoherences and retaining all its anachronisms, the inevitable artillery included. He probably accentuated the different characters, changing none, but developing each in the direction marked out by the model ; but, above all, he most

¹ The author of the anonymous play on Lear seems to have understood that, in spite of the popularity of the subject, the starting-point might seem inadmissible ; he brings a little nearer to possibility the examination by the old king of his daughters' sentiments, and transforms the too unreasonable competition of hyperboles into a question of what each would be willing to *do* for him : which allows the wicked ones to swear they would do anything, and especially marry whomsoever he pleases ; they know Cordelia's feelings and that she will be unable to pledge herself in the same way ("The True Chronicle History of King Leir," 1605, reprinted by the Malone Society, 1907). It is singular that the great dramatist, who took upon himself to change the final catastrophe, should not have adopted this modest and very sensible alteration of the legend.

certainly made them benefit by that supreme gift, that he alone could so generously dispense, the gift of life. Never so many shadows and such light, so intense a realism, allied to dimmer and more tragic dreamings; the whole so strange, so moving and unique, that the attraction of the drama has gone ever increasing, and that the most usual periphrase to designate Shakespeare to-day is: the author of "Hamlet."¹

The method of Shakespeare, so fond of complications, here shows to advantage. Hamlet is a complicated mind; the poet delights in depicting him and succeeds marvelously. The young Dane has the aspirations, the tenderness, the bitterness, the revolts, the contradictory decisions of open-hearted, open-minded people more supple than strong, of intellects that ever see all the reasons for and all the reasons against any resolve, of the refined to whom brutal action is repugnant. His dominant trait, the key to his character, is the impossibility for him of committing, with his eyes open, any violent act. He will be violent in

¹ The "Centurie of Prayse" makes it evident that, as soon as the play had appeared, it was the one oftenest quoted in contemporary literature. Captain Keeling, commanding the *Dragon*, at Sierra Leone, notes in his journal, in September, 1607, that he had "Richard II." played on board once and "Hamlet" twice, "to keepe my people from idlenes and unlawfull games or sleepe" ("Centurie," p. 79). The success is also shown by the haste of Henslowe's troupe to produce a rival play, "Hoffman" (ed. H. L. B., London, 1852) by that same Chettle who had published Greene's "Groatsworth," with the subsequent excuse to Shakespeare. This sombre drama, in earnest of which Chettle received 5s. on December 29, 1602 ("Hamlet" had been entered at the "Stationers," July 26th of the same year), turns also upon the vengeance taken by a son for his father's murder, and shows a young princess crazed by sorrow, who sings songs and says:

. . . I pray you, kill me not,
For I am going to the river's side,
To fetch white lilies and blue daffodils,
To stick in Lod'wick's bosom, where it bled,
And in mine own;—my true love is not dead.
No, you're deceived in him; my father is. (iv. i.)

words, but not in deeds ; he will be violent in deeds, but with his eyes shut, stabbing through an arras, or causing the execution, afar off, of two young noblemen, by means of a supposed letter. An incapacity of his nature restrains him : he cannot strike with his eyes open. It is as though some fastening were lacking to his plate armour, a splendid armour, well furnished, ornamented with exquisite chisellings, and which might, possibly, have been used in battle ; but a fastening is loose and nothing holds.

He appears ; already he is a prey to sadness ; even before the coming of the ghost he is steeped in woe, apprehending the worst, and, at the mere thought of horrible realities, longing to dissolve and disappear : "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt ! . . ." the longing certainly of no man destined to triumph over the difficulties of life and overstay Fortune. From now on, all that he will be later is already outlined ; this dreamer pictures to himself the materiality of things with the intensity of a poet : his mother is there, under his very eyes, in the arms of the accursed uncle, he cannot look away, he inflicts upon himself the torments of the damned. He wears his nerves out gazing ; they weaken ; he has as yet received no real shock, the malady begins at the mere thought of a possible one.

Then comes the great, the incomparable scene on the terrace, at night, in the cold gusts of wind, to the roar of the waves. The royal shade returns from the land of the dead to settle all doubts and mark out the plain and straight way of duty. Like weak men, on the impulse of the moment, Hamlet thinks every deed easy ; his vengeance will be "as swift as meditation or the thoughts of love." He will rid his mind of all else ; and this is an excellent preparation, deeply dramatic, for the scenes that follow with Ophelia. Renunciation, a negative deed, is within Hamlet's means. Effaced therefore is the thought

of Ophelia, effaced as much as a man who loves can quench in his heart the light of the beloved's eyes. After the great shock sustained at the ghost's apparition, here is a new and terrible one. Hamlet wanted to feign madness, the feigned madness and the real mingle, and he does not always know, and those around him do not always know, which inspires him. He laughs a sad laugh; stirred by the storm, the mire hidden in the depth of human souls rises to the surface: he has cruel retorts, profound or cynical, he jeers at himself and at others, a gross and sensual realism dictates to him horrible words; his mind becomes more unbalanced; nervous tension, moral exhaustion, plunge him into a torpor. Then suddenly he starts off in splendid flights, uttering memorable thoughts, and returning to his meditations and his dreams, his real domain: "What a piece of work is a man! . . ."

The meeting with the players recalls to him his duty: for Hecuba, that player weeps! And he. . . . His own weakness is revealed to him, and inspires him with horror, and that horror diminishes still more his faculty for action. His self-confidence decreases incessantly. He is but "a John a-dreams . . . pigeon-liver'd . . . an ass . . . a whore"; he heaps insults upon himself, and upon the tyrant: words, words! . . .

But now his resolution is taken. Only one test more, the last. It is indispensable: for what if that ghost were "a devil"? What if it had lied? This must be verified. The comedians shall play the murder scene before the king: "If he but blench, I know my course." My course, that is to say, what I shall do *then*; everything is possible *then*, but not now. And having, as he thinks, reached thus a firm resolve, he gives free vent to his natural thoughts: "To be or not to be. . . ." The famous monologue lets us foresee only too well what will follow.

Discomposed, the king rises and interrupts the perform-

ance. The moment has come: an awful moment lasting but a second. And what do we hear? the madman's nervous laugh, the pitiful babbling and vain railleries of the weakling incapable of action, who would like to deceive himself: "Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me), with two provincial roses on my rais'd shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?" And with shame and rage in his heart, he starts singing a silly song.

This is the culminating crisis in his mind's drama, for now the experiment has been made; the poor prince's unavowed impotency has become manifest to his own eyes; he is disabled, "in a sea of troubles," and, tragic misfortune, having once proved inadequate, he feels that he will prove so again.

He may now try indefinitely; we know what must happen: he will vainly lash his staggering will, weaker after each fall. Here another occasion offers . . . no, not now, the tyrant is praying; to kill him now would be to send him to heaven.

Journey to England, and return; Laertes, a young student of no account, proclaimed king without the slightest motive; Hamlet accepting to figure in a fencing match to amuse the tyrant whom he ought to slay; Laertes ready to kill Hamlet by the basest treachery: the play becomes as incoherent as the hero's dreams in his hours of madness; the warp shows through the velvet; the old plot is laid bare. At last Claudius's fate is accomplished on the stage strewn with corpses; seeing his mother stretched inanimate at his feet, himself poisoned and on the verge of death, Hamlet acts at last: it is an almost lifeless hand that avenges the royal Dane.

Claudius, the usurper, undoubtedly resembles the portrait roughly sketched by the author of the old play: image of a tyrant as clumsy as he is cruel, recalling those great

stupid monsters that sculptors gave to the St. Georges in cathedrals to spear. He lets the play be performed without asking what it is about; assists without wincing at the dumb-show that represents the poisoning through the ear, but winces a great deal afterwards. Caught in that "mouse-trap," and having said nothing at the dumb-show, a Claudius in real life would, no doubt, have continued to say nothing, but especially would promptly have rid himself of a prince so troublesome and who had just furnished such an excellent motive for it by killing Polonius, to the indignation of the whole country. The Claudius in the play thinks of it, but postpones, afraid of causing sorrow to the queen, and because it would be dangerous, Hamlet being "lov'd of the distracted multitude":¹ not so very much, however, since thereupon it proclaims Laertes king. Claudius invents nothing better than the stratagem of the journey to England, which Hamlet sees through from the first, and which proves for the usurper another "mouse-trap."

The Polonius family is first shown as a family of honest people, virtuous and upright. They trust each other. The question of the young prince, evidently in love with Ophelia, causes them all anxiety. Laertes gives his sister sound advice. Polonius acts toward his son as a prudent and affectionate father; the precepts with which he provisions the young man on his going abroad have been laughed at by critics, but only to make his character at the beginning of the play fit in with his character at the end.² The old courtier is hard on poor Ophelia, which is

¹ How dangerous is it, that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude (iv. 3).

² They are quite as wise as those of the Countess in "All's well," which are derided by no one, several even are identical: "Love all, trust a few—Give thy thoughts no tongue—Do wrong to none—Beware Of entrance to a quarrel: but, being in, Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee—Be able for thine

quite comprehensible: he is a man of the court, he is advanced in years, he naturally understands better the chances of disfavour than he does a young girl's love troubles. From the second act onward, he is no longer anything but a ridiculous pantaloon, made to be hood-winked, thoroughly self-satisfied—"We of wisdom"—important, foolish, losing the thread of his discourse, "a great baby." Laertes, at first a fine, attractive young man, then a quasi-king, becomes at the end an ignoble assassin, who, instead of a blunt foil, uses against Hamlet a "sword unbated" and anointed with deadly poison: Shakespeare frequently sets the same personage in full light, then in full shadow, according to the need of the moment. "'Tis almost 'gainst my conscience," says Laertes; this scruple is all that remains of the honour he was possessed of at the beginning, and he goes on with his base murder.

But Ophelia's character is as perfect a whole, in its way, as Hamlet's, as living and as true to nature. Chaste, modest, obedient, she is not at all stiff nor frigid in her chastity and virtue. She was made to be gay, happy, and to tease, if need be, that proud, handsome Laertes, that splendid elder brother, who knew so well how to lecture his little sister. Above all, she is loving; she loves through her sorrows, through the refusals and promises of the poor prince, without a protest, without a complaint; so simple, so graceful, so true, so far from grandiloquence or declamation, that the spectator is soon conquered. She has no need to speak, she has but to appear; all hearts go

enemy rather in power than use—The friends thou hast . . . grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel—Be check'd for silence but never tax'd for speech—Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice—Keep thy friend under thy own life's key," etc. Which of the two counsels thus? Several of Polonius's recommendations to Laertes are given to his own son by a contemporary who was no dotard, namely Walter Raleigh. "Avoid quarrels," says Raleigh, "but if thou be once engaged, carry thyself bravely, that they may fear thee after."—"Instruction to his son"; "Works," Oldys and Birch, vol. viii. p. 562.

to her, pitying her in advance, approving her before she has uttered a word. There is something divine about her ; nothing but good can come from her.

The most perfect type of the Shakespearian play is "Othello." In no other drama is his genius so constantly present. In the other masterpieces, where perhaps, by sudden flights, he rises higher still, that genius comes and goes, appears and disappears. Here it is never absent, and we have the model example of his style. The slips and incoherences are reduced to an infinitesimal quantity ; of contradictions in the characters and unlikelihood in the events there is no trace. The action is in full reality, and no effort of imagination could make it more tragic.¹ "Hamlet equals Orestes," wrote Musset, "Macbeth equals Ædipus, and I do not know what equals Othello."² The original is an Italian novel translated into French by Gabriel Chappuys in 1583,³ which supplied all the main events and the main personages in the play: the reluctance of the Moor to believe in his wife's guilt, his terrible threats against the traitor when the latter first begins his accusations, Desdemona's insistence on the dismissed officer's being taken back into favour, the part of the traitor's wife, a Venetian woman greatly liked by "Disdemona," the handkerchief incident, the wound inflicted by the traitor on the heroine's supposed lover, etc. Only the circumstances of the catastrophe are altered. There

¹ One barely finds some trace of Shakespeare's taste for *surcharge* and complications in the useless aggravation of the character of Iago, represented as a swindler and a thief, in a sort of "Collier de la Reine" story, which, sufficiently developed, might have filled a whole drama, as history showed only too well afterwards. Iago's persistence in recalling that he is the traitor, and in explaining beforehand his dark machinations, is not imputable to Shakespeare, but, as we have seen, to his public.

² "De la Tragédie"; *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 1902, p. 319.

³ Above, p. 248. The original supplied only one name, that of "Disdemona"; the other personages are called the Moor, the Enseign, etc.

is, however, another difference, the usual one, more marked here than anywhere else: floods of life throughout Shakespeare's drama, hardly any in the original.

In the play, not a being that is not living and does not say just what should be said; everything takes place before our eyes; no useless personage, no trickery to produce an effect. The interlocutors do not refrain from crying out the very words that we should like to prompt in hopes of averting the catastrophe; they say them, and it comes all the same; it could *not* not happen. From the opening scenes of one of those clear, picturesque, thrilling expositions in which Shakespeare excels, everything is explained; we hold the threads of the whole drama, and the characters are known to us: Iago, Othello, Desdemona, and even most of the secondary ones: Roderigo, Cassio, Brabantio. Their nature and their future attitude are revealed to us: Iago, with his envenomed envy, his vanity and his disappointed ambition, his gross cynicism, the diabolical imagery of his language; the Moor, simple, courteous, almost gentle of speech, disinterested, confiding, cool-headed withal, not easily irritated, having the inward calm and self-possession of the true warrior. He meets Desdemona's father surrounded by relatives who thirst for his own blood. "Honest" Iago perfidiously advises retreat; Othello refuses; all draw their rapiers; but the Moor:

Put

~~Keep~~ up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years,
Than with your weapons.

This natural placidity will render only more striking his fits of fury later on. His speech to the Senate is in the same plain and dignified tone; it is the language of a man who has nothing to conceal, having nothing to reproach himself with, and, moreover, has never known

fear. Truth shines through every word of his. One might have wondered at the passion of a beautiful Venetian maiden for the African ; as soon as he has opened his lips, one understands that love. The doge says :

I think, this tale would win my daughter too.

Desdemona's portrait is equally luminous ; not a corner of her heart remains obscure, all of it is revealed to us ; the artist reserves to himself no possibility for any subterfuge. A gentle and bewitching mind, she is as upright, as confiding as the Moor. Very young, very beautiful, born to love, she has the romantic imagination of fair persons of her age, and, as usual, no one of those who see her go about her daily household tasks suspects it, least of all her father—"a maiden never bold, of spirit so still and quiet," says Brabantio. She is truly of the family of Shakespeare's heroines, with her roguish grace, her ill-timed teasings, as of a woman who has not even a suspicion of the tragedies of life ; so simple that she has no thought of the extraordinary, who lives in it unawares, who has consented to marry the Moor as the most natural thing in the world, since she loved him. She is just the woman to lose her handkerchief in wanting to do a gracious act, just the woman not to notice the gathering storm, not to hear the warning of distant thunder, until it be too late ; whereas any one of more common stuff, any Emilia, would have divined and understood long before, and would have avoided the danger.

Drop by drop, the poison is poured into the Moor's mind, very slowly, before our eyes, and the first drop by Desdemona's father, even before the departure from Venice :

Look to her, Moor, have a quick eye to see ;
She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.

From scene to scene, Iago continues his manœuvring, his semi-insinuations, his reticences, repeating Othello's words as if he feared some hidden meaning in them. He makes himself very small; his suspicions are mere nothings, shadows of suspicions, and, besides, so often one has them about nothing, particularly he, it is his nature. Above all, Othello must not be jealous: "Beware, my lord, of jealousy." And ever the hero's straightforward nature appears: Jealous? No! Suspect my wife because she talks, because she is gay? Never! But in the presence of facts, then no more love, no hesitation, the end sudden and irremediable:

Away at once with love or jealousy.

Thus each future development of the play is, in essence, in the foregoing scene; no better example of a well-joined drama can be imagined.

We have not got as far as that, says honest Iago: "I speak not yet of proof"; all I ask of you is to open your eyes; I know the ways of Venice—thus reminding the Moor that he does not belong to the country and is ignorant of many things; and the traitor repeats, by sheer instinct, Brabantio's warning:

She did deceive her father, marrying you.

Above all, don't go and imagine "grosser issues" than I mean; and it is a way of setting them before his eyes.¹

The torture begins; the knots grow tighter, the poison spreads through the veins:

¹ Hints for Iago's policy of reticence are in the original thus translated by Chappuys: "Je ne veux pas, respondit l'Enseigne, m'entremesler du mary et de la femme; mais si vous le regardez de près vous le verrez vous mesme. L'Enseigne ne voulut passer outre, quoy que le More l'en sollicitast fort: trop bien ces parolles laissèrent un tant poignant éguillon au cœur du More qu'il se mit soigneusement à penser que vouloient signifier telles parolles, et en estoit tout mélancolique," fol. 326.

Why did I marry? This honest creature, doubtless,
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

The case is soon past hope, and the cure is impossible ; resistance and desperate struggle to break the fatal net will be vain ; the handkerchief, so artfully used, is scarcely needed ; without it the torture would have been longer, but the end as surely tragic. Iago insists : Don't get impassioned, be cool ; Cassio is an excellent officer and my friend ; you must restore him to his rank ; he is worthy of it. But not at once ; see how he will behave ; if Desdemona intercedes warmly for him, it will be an important sign. Each revolt of the Moor will only draw the net tighter ; his now excited fury diminishes his clear-sightedness ; the poison can be poured in larger doses, the proofs can be of a grosser sort. It is he himself who at present thirsts for them :

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore ;
Be sure of it ; give me the ocular proof ;
Or, by the worth of mine eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog,
Than answer my wak'd wrath.¹

The catastrophe is imminent. Desdemona trembles without comprehending, but Emilia has guessed the truth. The intensity of the drama is increased from one moment to another, because the heroes are warned in every scene of their danger, and fly to it nevertheless, urged by an invincible fatality. Emilia's words, Desde-

¹ III. 3. In Chappuys's text : " Je ne scay qui me tient que je ne te coupe cete langue tant hardie de donner tel blasme à ma femme. A l'heure l'Enseigne dist. Je n'attendois pas autre récompense de ce mien amiable office . . . mais puis que ma faute et le desir que j'ay de vostre honneur m'ont porté si avant, je vous redy que l'affaire va ainsi que vous l'avez entendu." And, further on : " A l'heure le More tout fâché dist. Si tu ne me fais voir ce que tu m'as dit, asseure toy que je te feray cognoistre que mieux t'eust valu estre né muet," fol. 327.

mona's candour, make the Moor hesitate for a second on the brink—"I am your loyal wife!"

—Come, swear it, damn thyself;
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves
Should fear to seize thee.

He weeps, his tortures are horrible, but he has said, and we know it, once the wound opened, with him it will be incurable.

Desdemona is as incapable of saving herself as Othello of recovering his equanimity. She cannot unravel nor understand anything, save that the end of her happiness has come, and that perhaps her catastrophe is at hand. It seems to her that she sleeps, that she hears abuse as in a dream; she is as a child, a sort of child-wife, her husband should have chid her as one does children.¹ Her anxieties grow, and she still would set them aside:

Pr'ythee, to-night
Lay on my bed my wedding-sheets—remember.

And as she is about to dismiss Emilia, she adds:

How foolish are our minds!—
If I do die before thee, 'pr'ythee, shroud me
In one of those same sheets.

Poor Barbara's song comes back to her mind, the song of the willow—"the willow," Spenser had said, "worne of forlorne Paramours."² She sings, she interrupts herself. "Who is it that knocks?—It's the wind."

The final scene is heart-rending, opened by Othello's monologue on the life that he can take away, the torch

¹ Those, that do teach young babes,
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,
I am a child to chiding (iv. 2).

² "Faerie Queene," book i. canto i.

that he can quench, and that no Promethean fire can ever light again; then it is the terrors of the child-wife, her supplications, her appeal that she may live till the morrow, and her last word exhaled with her last breath, word of pardon, last word of love, word which reveals, within that trembling heart, a hero's generosity.

IV.

In real life, the comic is never very far from the tragic, nor in Shakespeare's drama either. The poet hates absolute classifications; if some characters approaching abstract types slip into his plays, they are exceptions. As a rule, his heroes are variable; they are influenced by circumstances; they do not belong to distinct categories; we shall see, as occasion offers, comic kings and tragic peasants, it is with the personages as with the plays themselves, laughable scenes will intersect a sombre drama, and serious scenes a comedy. The grave or the gay predominates according to circumstances, but neither the one nor the other is totally excluded: such is life.

A storm arises; the ship is about to sink, the fate of the sailors and passengers hangs by a thread. Those passengers are kings, princes, high dignitaries. The first scene of the "Tempest" is a whole tragedy and a whole comedy, one poignant, the other laughable, as true one as the other; and the two impressions, equally strong, are given in a few phrases. The peril is so imminent that already the equality of after death begins. The sailors have lost all respect for the great men that they have the honour of conveying: "I pray now, keep below . . . you mar our labour! Keep your cabin; you do assist the storm. . . . Hence! what care these roarers for the name of king? To cabin! silence! trouble us not.

"*Gonzalo* (who, with another, has made ill-timed

remarks and asked useless questions, imagining they have encouraged the sailors, as is the case with all high personages in like occurrence). Good ; yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

"*Boatswain.* None that I more love than myself."

As the tempest increases, the various characters stand out more clearly, and their inward nature shows forth. The high dignitaries remember etiquette and remain ceremonious to the last, so deeply have their functions stamped their imprint on their whole beings. But if there is in their professional punctiliousness something to smile at, there is something to admire too, for death is about to take them, and ridiculous though their courtliness may be, they have at least the courage to think of something else than their own end.

"*Gonzalo.* We split, we split, we split.

"*Antonio.* Let's all sink with the king.

"*Sebastiano.* Let's take leave of him."

As, in tragedy, Shakespeare does not want all eyes to turn to one hero, centre of the play, so, in comedy, he does not mean to unfold before us one only character, surrounded by mere accessories serving to make it more conspicuous. He shows individuals, with their good and bad qualities, their contradictions, their milieu, their relatives, their servants, their neighbours, who have also their individuality—all the bustle and agitation of the human bee-hive. In his plays, wisdom has no authorised representative ; no Ariste, no Éliante. Of wisdom there remain shreds on every bramble ; ours to gather it, if we choose, on the heath paced by the fool, on the highway followed by tun-bellied Falstaff, in the meadows where Autolycus has sung his song.

Wisdom has no authorised representative, the personages are individuals, not ready-found types ; the *genre* itself is subject to no rule. It has no visible limits ; many plays

are tragedies or comedies as one pleases. The personages of merriest wit, the most burlesque caricatures, can be found in the dramas with the most terrible catastrophes : Mercutio, Peter, the nurse, in "Romeo and Juliet." The comedies, properly so called, are made up of elements as varied as the dark dramas. There is room in them for schoolboy tricks, visions of fairyland, dances, songs, pageants, pantomimes, maidens disguised as pages to run after their lovers, tavern scenes, pastoral scenes, scenes of provincial life and of forest life in imaginary Ardens ; quarrels, scoldings, indecencies, "wit-combats," the most refined pleasantry and the coarsest. We find in them traits worthy of Molière, sometimes the same as in Molière, who will re-invent them on his own account : "We are all frail," says hypocritical Angelo, forestalling Tartuffe's famous

Ah ! pour être dévot, je n'en suis pas moins homme.

At other times, so great is the variety, we get a foretaste of the kind of humour *Punch* has accustomed us to : "If I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves."¹

The coarsest jests, the easiest of reach, the oftenest tried, are found almost anywhere, even in the historical plays, where the bastard Faulconbridge, merely outlined in the model play, but shown by Shakespeare through a magnifying glass, provokes laughter by his gestures and remarks, befitting the valiant and joyous brute that he is. The stupid constable, the dullard who confuses one word with another, the clown who executes errands all wrong, for which cause they are usually entrusted to him, the Irishman, the Scotchman, the Welshman, the Frenchman, speaking each his gibberish, are infallible means of amusement ; Shake-

¹ "Merry Wives," i. 1.

speare never wearies of employing them, nor the audience of making merry over them. The result is so certain that, in order to obtain it once more, the poet, generally so respectful of ready-made plots, goes so far as to deprive himself, in "*Much Ado about Nothing*," of the great and striking effect that Bandello's tale afforded him with its church scene, in order to have an occasion for dialogues between silly watchmen saying "senseless" instead of "sensible," "statues" instead of "statutes," etc. The traitor's misdeeds are revealed to them by chance comers who, to tell their secrets, choose just the part of the street where the watchmen are seated. Spectators would laugh to their hearts' content at the misuse of words, and be delighted at these strange happenings, worth looking at precisely because so strange.

Witticisms and "merry fooling" were also of unfailing effect: we know that the public could spend a whole afternoon at impromptu "wit-combats." Still more pleasure would they take in the thrusts and parries of a *Mercutio*, a *Rosalind*, a *Beatrice*, a *Benedick*, in the flings of *Kate the shrew*, and of *Petruchio* her tamer; in *Launcelot Gobbo's* "trying confusions" with his old blind father;¹ even in the torrents of abuse of *Apemantus* or of *Thersites*: they found that abuse ingeniously invented; it was still, in their eyes, a kind of wit, "flytings" in the Scotch manner. Wit is the quality on which lays stress, in his flowery language, the pirate who published the play where *Thersites* figures: "So much and such savored salt of witte is in [this author's] commedies that they seeme, for their height of pleasure, to be borne in that sea that brought forth *Venus*."

¹ "O heavens, this is my true begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind . . . knows me not. I will try confusions with him." And he jocosely gives the old man all sorts of misleading information.—"*Merchant of Venice*," ii. 2.

Amongst all there is none more witty then this.”¹ The public admired all that jugglery of words and those “confusions,” as it would have gaped in the street at the tricks of a mountebank. The success of “Love’s Labour’s Lost” had early apprised Shakespeare of the infallibility of this method. Late in his career, he saw that mediocre work of his youth brought out again: “I have sent and bene all thys morning,” wrote Sir Walter Cope to Lord Cranborne, “huntyng for players, juglers and such kinde of creaturs, but fynde them harde to fynde; wherfore, leavinge notes for them to seeke me, Burbage ys come, and sayes ther ys no new playe that the Quene hath not seene, but they have revyved an olde one cawled ‘Loves Labore lost,’ which for wytt and mirthe, he sayes, will please her excedingly. And thys ys apointed to be played to-morowe night at my Lord Sowthamptons, unless you send a wrytt to remove the *corpus cum causa* to your howse in Strande. Burbage ys my messenger ready attendyng your pleasure.”²

Bursts of hearty laughter kept the audience in lively mood; subtle remarks (and they abound) would not have sufficed. This explains why such crackling is, to our taste, often too noisy. What was then considered crackling, what the personages of the plays themselves held as such, scarcely hiding their admiration for their own triumphs as “wit-crackers,”³ seems to us more like

¹ “And all such dull and heavy-witted worldlings, as were never capable of the witte of a commedie, comming by report of them to his representations, have found that witte there, that they never found in themselves, and have parted better-wittied then they came.”—“A never writer to an ever-reader,” prefacing “The famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid,” 1609.

² Document of 1604-5 found in the Hatfield papers by Halliwell-Phillipps and published in his “Outlines,” ii. pp. 83, 84.

³ “Much Ado,” last scene. In “Taming,” word fencings, greatly resembling an exchange of blows, are judged by the characters in the play as examples of the prettiest wit:

How likes Gremio these quick-witted folks? (v. 2.)—

fusillades; even the amiable Rosalind who makes such pretty remarks (this one for instance: "For lovers lacking matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss") has some terribly grating notes in her voice. Beatrice discharges her wit shafts as a catapult hurls stones, and without any more heed as to who receives them; at the very start, she takes as confidant of her sentiments for Benedick a messenger, who must think her a very impertinent hare-brained young person. To the reader of to-day she appears pretentious and cumbersome; her heavy teasing, then judged so elegant, is near recalling at times school-boys' wrangles, or the amorous punchings of country lovers.¹

With that, shrewd traits of observation, innumerable vistas suddenly opened, sometimes by a single word revealing all that human nature contains of hidden vice or of secret grandeur, some unexpected word uttered by a servant arranging the chairs, or by one of the heroes of the drama ("Why should a man be proud?" says Ajax, pride itself), and which will stir the hearer, will be to him as a ray of light, and will leave him between laughter and tears, deeply moved. Those traits abound in "Hamlet."

Admirable scenes, too, of middle life comedy, describing with wondrous exactitude everyday existence, everybody's habits of mind,² the contradictions of human natures,³

Again, in "Love's Labour's Lost":

Their conceits have wings

Fleeter than arrows, bullets, winds, thought, fleeter things. (v. 2.)

¹ Beatrice will never marry. "So," says Benedick, "some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face."

"Beatrice. Scratching would not make it worse an 'twere such a face as yours were," etc. ("Much Ado," i. 1). Cf. similar scenes in "Love's Labour's Lost," between Biron and Rosaline, ii. 1; in "Two Gentlemen," between Valentine and Thurio, ii. 4; and, quite at the other end of the poet's career, in "Tempest," ii. 1, and in "Cymbeline," i. 3. On such wranglings in mediæval literature, see above, vol. I. p. 444.

² See, for example, the exquisite first scene of "The Merchant of Venice."

³ Witness that trait, worthy of Molière, in the otherwise inconspicuous part

or else quiet provincial life, the petty ambitions, the petty rivalries that break its monotony ; the stir, too, produced in such a milieu by the arrival of a Falstaff.

Falstaff and his crew belong as absolutely to Shakespeare as Panurge and Gargantua to Rabelais, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to Cervantes. The character is unique of its kind, as justly famous, and as worthy of immortality ; dress, manner, turn of mind, vices, associates, everything that concerns him, the sound of his voice, the colour of his cheeks and of his beard, are put before us with incomparable vividness. Callot could not have drawn the contour of the personage with a more exact graver than has Shakespeare in one line when he represents him walking before his page "like a sow that has overwhelmed all her litter but one." As fat as Panurge is thin, he has as much wit and resourcefulness, promptitude at repartee,¹ wily ways to escape blows, to catch good bits, to leave the burden of life to others, and count happy days, surrounded by scorn to which he is indifferent, by dangers that he knows how to avoid, tipping his sack ("in potum copiose immittunt saccarum," says Hentzner of the English), handled sometimes rather roughly, but quickly consoled, and always regaining his imperturbable good-humour. No mishap makes upon him any durable impression ; not even the harsh rebuffs and cruel pranks now and then inflicted on him, nor his great disappointment at the

of Adriana. She complains bitterly of her husband : four lines of insulting epithets. But why then, says her sister, are you jealous of him ?

—Ah ! but I think him better than I say.

("Errors," iv. 2.)

¹ "*Pr. Henry.* . . . Art thou not ashamed ?

"*Falstaff.* Dost thou hear, Hal ? thou know'st, in the state of innocence, Adam fell ; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do, in the days of villainy ? Thou seest, I have more flesh than another man ; and therefore more frailty."—"1 *Henry IV.*," iii. 3.

coming to the throne of his bosom friend, Prince Hal. He recovers himself at once: "I shall be sent for in private to him: look you, he must seem thus to the world. Fear not your advancement." From time to time, too, a melancholy plaint, funnier than any of his jollities: "'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugg'd bear. . . . An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn. . . . Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me.

"*Bardolph*. Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long.

"*Falstaff*. Why, there is it:—come, sing me a bawdy song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be. . . ."¹

Following in his wake, we penetrate, when it suits him to leave his ignoble tavern, into the society of middle-class people, and thus we see charming corners of provincial life, depicted with the utmost exactness, though, as always, some caricatural sketches are added to life-like portraits, making these shine to better advantage—provincial life quietly spent in the land of Do-you-remember? where one never forgets the youthful days in the great city which it would be so pleasant to see again! What is going on there? Is Jane so and so still living? and how is she? "Old, old, Master Shallow."—"Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that that this knight and I have seen! Ha, Sir John?" The guests are detained with instant request; they are offered the best pigeons, the best joint of mutton; they sing in the garden in front of the house. Who knows? perhaps the passing guest will pull us out of our province, will have us appointed to the city—where we will find our youth again, since it is there that we left it, and it is waiting for us, may be. The passing guest is seen through rose-coloured spectacles;

¹ "1 Henry IV.," i. 2, and iii. 3.

he comes from yonder; he knows every one; most certainly he can do all that he pleases.

In "Merry Wives," Falstaff appears again in the foreground; but he has there to meet his match; he falls in with a set of honest folk, faithful subjects of the Queen, cheerful, sensible, hospitable, well-to-do, worthy representatives of a class, the backbone of the nation, whose rôle was steadily becoming more important. Happily married, good husbands of good wives, Page and Ford, friends and neighbours, have each his own nature: the one all plain and open-minded, the other with a tendency to jealousy which makes him do many an unwise thing and places him in ridiculous situations. But he gets out of scrapes because he is no fool, frankly confesses his errors, and refrains from sulking. Anne Page, the young girl, is the beauty of the neighbourhood, the heiress with whom the whole borough is in love, even too a young gallant who has strayed from the court hard by, and, happily, turns out to be a true gentleman who will get the better, in the end, of his rich and silly rivals: so that the amiable maid will have had her romance, a pleasant and reasonable one, as it behoves, with a happy ending.

Falstaff's self-complacency, coarseness, and impecuniosity lead him to confound the good wives of Windsor with the inmates of the Boar's Head tavern. Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, close friends, tell each other about the declaration they have received; the same, word for word—

C'est une circulaire, il se moquait de nous,

writes Mr. Francis de Croisset in a play where he causes Chérubin to use again the same device.¹ "I warrant,"

¹ "Chérubin," 1902.

says Mrs. Page, "he hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for different names." The two ladies feel wroth at first, then laugh at the not very flattering adventure which happens to them, at their age, having always lived honest; and all owing to that whale! "What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor?" They will, since whale there be, fasten to their lines hooks for whales. Falstaff thrice bites at the bait; he is as severely punished as he deserves. Tricked and derided, half drowned, half roasted, but always recovering his spirits, much is forgiven him at the end because he has caused much merriment. The good wives, avenged, go home together :

Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

This bohemia, like all bohemias, ends the more sadly that it has been more lawless and roisterous. Shakespeare, who does nothing by halves, hangs Nym and Bardolph, sends their women friends to die of foul diseases in the hospital, and stifles his huge Falstaff in a filthy garret at the horrible Mrs. Quickly's: "So 'a cried out," says Mrs. Quickly, "God, God, God! three or four times: now, I to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God; I hoped, there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet." The hour, however, had come.

V.

Shakespeare uses in his language the same liberty as in his conception of characters. Naught so high that he cannot reach it, naught so low that he does not stoop to it. Each

one of his personages employs the kind of speech suited to his station, accentuated rather than attenuated, for the usual motive that contrasts must be marked. In Racine, Phèdre and Œnone draw from the same vocabulary; in Shakespeare, Phèdre would have spoken, at times at least, in a more exalted strain, and Œnone in a lower one than in real life. Medleys and contrasts: such is one of the rules of Shakespeare's poetic art; extremes have an attraction for him. To Juliet's sweet words succeed the nurse's babblings; to Prospero's grave talk, Caliban's cursings and his boon companions' profane swagger; in the same play, we meet the fairies of the woods, light as air, and the "hard-handed men that work in Athens here"; harsh sounds alternate with a musical flutter. The coarse jests of the tavern haunters still ring in our ears, and we are suddenly transported to court, where the old king, tormented by illness, murmurs his famous invocation to sleep:

How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep!—O sleep, O gentle sleep!
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why, rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lull'd with sounds of sweetest melody? . . .
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds? . . .
Canst thou, O partial sleep! give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And, in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king?¹

¹ "2 Henry IV.," iii. 1.

In the guard-house we shall hear the language of the guard-house. If refined minds had been shocked at the use of the word "dog" in a tragedy of Racine, how much more were they when they perceived, a century and a half after the event, that, in the first lines of "Hamlet," room had been found for a "mouse." Doubtless, said Voltaire, in his letter to the French Academy on Le Tourneur's translation of Shakespeare, "a soldier may speak thus in a guard-house, but not on the stage, before the first persons of the nation, who express themselves with nobleness, and before whom he must express himself in the same manner." To which Shakespeare might have replied: But my soldiers were talking among themselves; they were not, and for very good reasons, addressing the "Grand Monarque," nor even our Queen Elizabeth, who, besides, had heard worse than that, and would not have been shocked in the least.

The tone is raised as easily as it is lowered; no poet takes flight with more facility than Shakespeare; to rise in a continuous ascent far over the highest summits, he starts without effort from muddy earth. The dialogue drags, the play languishes, incoherences irritate reason; suddenly, with marvellous ease and majesty, the eagle spreads its great wings and hovers above the ocean, directs its firm gaze towards the sun's dazzling rays or towards the shadows of eternal night. Time and again, in Shakespeare's plays, the poet comes to the rescue of the dramatist, and it is an enchantment; reason is hushed, the eye admires, the heart listens; the incomparable artist attains, far more, fixes for ever the unattainable. Those intoxicating minutes of joy or anguish, supreme moments whose lustre or horror lay their deep impress on our lives, are caught by him and fixed as the painter fixes on his canvas a glimmer which has shone and faded. The silent crowd watches the reddened sun ready to disappear;

Claude Lorrain arrests it on the horizon. A ray of light has slipped into the philosopher's chamber; Rembrandt has preserved it to us for ever. Above the garden, wrapped in the dim light of approaching dawn, the cry of the lark has been heard, and from century to century, successive generations will be moved by those notes that parted the lovers. Thanks to their divine faculty, the poet and the artist do not return from heaven speechless; they can tell what they have seen, and to the intangible and the transitory give duration.

Shakespeare's language acquires or loses weight, becomes abrupt, sprightly, or languid, according to the occasion; the tone changes with a quickness that partakes of the marvellous, and it would be hard to say whether he is more at ease in the highest style or the coarsest. He is at home and moves freely everywhere; his phrase has, at moments, the transparent tenuity of a cobweb, and at moments the massiveness of a cyclopean wall. Who would dare say whether Falstaff is best described, or Queen Mab? The words flow slowly like a thick oil, and suddenly bound, take wings, and become as light as butterflies.

Their number has nothing remarkable; Shakespeare's vocabulary is normal, and certainly does not attract attention by any unusual richness; he employs less than half the terms in use in his time. The great effects he produces are mainly due to the way in which he handles and couples his words, and the care with which he makes their sounds clash or accord. "In a game of tennis," wrote Pascal, "one and the other play with the same ball, but one places it better."¹ Therein lies Shakespeare's merit; in that, and not in any display of a more or less whimsical wealth of words (nothing so easy or more

¹ "Quand on joue à la paume, c'est une même balle dont on joue l'un et l'autre, mais l'un la place mieux."—"Pensées."

common), consists his mastership as a stylist. His most striking ideas are expressed in the simplest words. Imogen hears of Posthumus's coming to Milford Haven :

If one of mean affairs
May *plod* it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day? ¹

The sudden ecstasies of lovers dazzle and vanish :

These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumphs die ! like fire and powder,
Which, *as they kiss, consume.*²

Gloster's eyes having been put out, Regan says :

Let him *smell*
His way to Dover.³

Antony and Cleopatra have "kissed away kingdoms." 'Tis dangerous? says fiery Hotspur, "Why, that's certain; 'tis dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink! but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety;" and addressing his wife, who wants to detain him, he tells her: "This is no world . . . to tilt with lips."⁴ Other examples offer thoughts as clear as day, but so condensed that it would be impossible to translate them into any language without using periphrases, that is, without destroying the poetry in them: a ship tossed by the storm seems to "kiss her burial."⁵

Sometimes the choice of a word, unexpected in that

¹ "Cymbeline," iii. 2.

² "Romeo," ii. 6.

³ "King Lear," iii. 7.

⁴ "1 Henry IV.," ii. 3.

⁵ "Merchant of Venice," i. 1. A prisoner is likely to suffer death: "Thy head stands so tickle on thy shoulders, that a milkmaid, if she be in love, may *sigh it off*" ("Measure," i. 3). What will the dim beyond prove to be for a man about to be hanged? He must "*jump* the after-inquiry on [his] own peril" ("Cymbeline," v. 4).

particular place and connection, itself forms the whole image, and the result is most striking. When Claudius drinks, the trumpet "brays." The soldier half wakened after dreaming of "breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,"

. . . Swears a prayer or two,
And sleeps again.¹

The most commonplace object suggests comparisons which would never have occurred to a poet less observing and less attentive to realities; a stammerer's words come out of his mouth, "as wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle; either too much at once, or none at all."²

Add moreover that, a poet-born, Shakespeare sees things in images, or rather with an accompaniment, an irradiance so to say of images; the thing is there as nature made it, and the poet sees it as it is; but the image is there too, vivid yet transparent, with its material substratum discernible through it. Sometimes, to be sure, those luminous rays with which natural objects are aureoled in Shakespeare's eye, distort the contours and destroy proportions. Such is the case, for instance, when it is a question of sighs or tears. Those signs of emotion scarcely ever offer themselves to the dramatist's imagination save under the guise of floods and storms. The Romans risk causing the Tiber to overflow with their tears; Richard II. spoils the harvest with his sobs and sighs. Juliet is "a bark, a sea, a wind"; her tears, old Capulet explains, are the sea, her body is the bark, her sighs are the wind. Laertes does not weep over drowned Ophelia:

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears.

¹ "Romeo," i. 4.

² "As you like it," iii. 2.

Romeo roams abroad before sunrise,

With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs.

The habit is a settled one ; the poet reverts to it almost mechanically ; his heroes feel they have never said enough, they try to outdo each other ; Richard II. proposes a competition in weeping :

Or shall we play the wantons with our woes,
And make some pretty match with shedding tears?
As thus :—To drop them still upon one place,
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves
Within the earth.

Mere child's play, thinks Queen Elizabeth in "Richard III.;" as for herself, she will "send forth plenteous tears to drown the world."¹

If Shakespeare always leaves to his characters their natural sentiments and allows them to explain themselves freely and plead their cause, almost to excess, he often, on the other hand, steals their poetical sensations ; he pushes his personages aside, takes their place at the window, and looks out upon the world. No character in any play can say what hour it is without the thought of that hour arousing in Shakespeare's mind all sorts of images which he stops to describe, for his own enjoyment. Anxious to know whether he shall live or die, the old King of France questions Helena. Helena would like to reply : Before two days you will be cured ; but Shakespeare, coming forth, gives himself the pleasure of speaking in her stead :

¹ "Julius Caesar," i. 1, "Richard II.," iii. 3, "Romeo and Juliet," iii. 5, "Hamlet," iv. 7, "Romeo and Juliet," i. 1, "Richard III.," ii. 2. It may be appropriate to recall that such exaggerations were frequent in the romances then in vogue. In the "Diana" of Montemayor a shepherd causes the grass to grow in a meadow, and the water surrounding an island to rise, by the abundance of his tears.

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
 Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring;
 Ere twice in murk and occidental damp
 Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp;
 Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass
 Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,

you will be cured ; and three different images are put to use in order to express this promise.¹ And if it should be alleged that Helena here adopts voluntarily a poetical prophetic tone, yet one would surely have to admit that, in "Hamlet," it cannot be Horatio, but most certainly Shakespeare, who thus addresses the officer on guard before the castle :

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.²

It is he, and not Don Pedro, who says :

The wolves have prey'd ; and look, the gentle day,
 Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
 Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray.³

It is he, and not old Capulet with his unpoetical soul, who, having in his thoughts : two years from now, has on his lips :

Let two more summers wither in their pride.⁴

In Shakespeare's sight, in his hands, material objects and fancy abstractions take life ; he cannot think of health or illness without making animate beings of them ;⁵

¹ " All's Well," ii. 1.

² " Hamlet," i. 1.

³ " Much Ado," v. 3.

⁴ " Romeo," i. 2.

⁵ What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,
 Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

(" All's Well," ii. 1.)

he cannot name the earth without thinking of the earth's "bosom": Bolingbroke has returned to England, and marched

So many miles upon her peaceful bosom.¹

To restrain, to master himself, in this as in anything else, is for Shakespeare an impossibility; he attains to the sublime, and, without hesitation, oversteps its limit, and we no longer have aught but laborious conceits, far-fetched juxtapositions, and mere word play. But how be moderate and reasonable, how remember the rules of taste and of grammar,² when one is in a state of ecstasy, a sort of "frenzy"?—

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation, and a name.³

Thus does Shakespeare himself describe the workings of an inspired artist's mind.

Shakespeare's normal verse is the blank verse of five

¹ "Richard II.," ii. 3. Being exiled, Bolingbroke observes that his tongue will henceforth be "enjailed,"

Doubly portcullis'd, with my teeth and lips,

the "jailer" being "ignorance," that is to say, he will have to live in a country whose language he does not know (*ibid.* i. 3).

² Example of an ellipsis making the grammatical construction of the phrase impossible:

Thy honourable metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed—

may be worked into dispositions contrary to its natural ones ("Julius Cæsar," i. 2).

³ "Midsummer Night's Dream," v. 1.

accented syllables (ten syllables in all, the second of each foot bearing the accent) that Sackville had introduced on the stage with his "Gorboduc," and that Marlowe, Peele, Greene, and Lyly had, since, helped to improve and make popular. It was still, however, a novelty when the great poet began to write, and he did not fully adopt it at once. By instinct a conservative rather than an innovator, he first conformed to the long established customs, then gradually emancipated himself.¹ In his early plays the old system predominates: riming couplets with no run-on lines and with a more or less marked pause after each rime, as in French classical tragedies. Thus we find 1,028 rimed lines of five accents in "Love's Labour's Lost," and only 579 blank verse. In "The Tempest," on the other hand, there are but two rimed lines, and in "Winter's Tale" none at all.²

While he was gradually ridding himself of rime, Shakespeare adopted another reform of which he was not the initiator either; he more and more discarded the regular pause at the end of the verse, and run-on lines became frequent with him. The cadence of the period loses thereby its monotony, that sort of clock-ticking that French tragedies have been so often blamed for; the meaning is continued without stop from one line to another, and the phrase moves on as rapid as the deeds it relates, or as slow.³ There remains still a cadence which

¹ Daniel, a confirmed conservative and partisan of rime, who admired only dramas in the classical style, ended by conceding that blank verse did well in tragedies, although he himself wrote his "Cleopatra" in rimed couplets: "I must confesse my adversary hath wrought this much upon mee that I thinke a Tragedie would indeed best comport with a blancke verse and dispense with Ryme."—"Defence of Ryme," written in 1602; "Works," Grosart, vol. iv. p. 64.

² Dowden's figures; this being said of the text proper, and leaving apart chorus, epilogue, songs, and pageants.

³ A device already familiar to Sir Thomas Wyatt, who offers numerous examples of it in his poems.

comes from the number of accents, but a discreet one, that does not turn attention away from the thoughts it embellishes. As Shakespeare advanced in his career, he found that swinging motion still too marked, and he multiplied the number of lines in which he added, especially at their close, a supplementary unaccented syllable; eleven syllables in all.¹ As to the number of run-on lines, there was but one out of eighteen in "Love's Labour's Lost"; there is one out of three in "The Tempest." These differences have been legitimately used to supplement other proofs, and determine the date of Shakespeare's plays, or, at least, the period of his life to which their composition belongs.²

VI.

By one of the interlinear additions introduced at the last moment into his will, Shakespeare, as we have seen, had

. . . I open here and spread
My fault to thee. (Psalm vi.)
. . . By the goodness
Of Him that hath perfect intelligence
Of heart contrite, and covereth the greatness
Of sin. . . (Psalm xxxii.)

Run-on lines are approved by Daniel who praises this way to "beguile the eare with a running out and a passing over the ryme, as no bound to stay us."—"Defence of Ryme"; Works, vol. iv. p. 64.

¹ Example :

Upon | this ground : | and more | it would | content || me
To have | her ho | nour true, | than your | suspi || cion.

"Winter's Tale," ii. i. Sometimes, but rarely, the line is augmented by two supplementary syllables.

² Furnivall, "The Succession of Shakspeare's Works" (Introduction to the "Commentaries" of Gervinus), London, 1877, his Introduction to the "Leopold Shakspeare" and his "Shakspeare," 1908, pp. 89, 114, 137, 147, 263. For further details on Shakespeare's prosody, his liberties and licences, their probable motives, the displacing of accents transferred from the second to the first syllable of the foot, the contraction of words, etc., see Abbott, "A Shakesperian Grammar," "Prosody."

bequeathed twenty-six shillings and eightpence to three of his fellow-players, John Heminge, Richard Burbage and Henry Condell, all three actors of renown, and among the best of the troupe. Seven years after Shakespeare's death, Heminge and Condell (Burbage having died some time before) justified the mark of special affection left them by their friend. Towards the end of 1623 came out a volume in folio, of over nine hundred double-column pages, "printed by Isaac Jaggard¹ and Ed. Blount," and entitled: "Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies." Below the title, the poet's portrait, engraved on copper and signed "Martin Droeshout sculpsit London"; on the back of the half-title were printed ten lines by Jonson, stating that the artist had "well hit" the likeness. After the title (with some changes in the order of these preliminary matters according to copies) came a dedication signed by the two players, who offered, in terms of humblest deference, "these trifles," the works of Shakespeare, to the Earl of Pembroke and to his brother, the Earl of Montgomery, who had been pleased to think them "some-thing heretofore," and had "prosequuted both them, and their Author living, with so much favour." Heminge and Condell affirmed they had done their best towards those "orphanes," and had tried to approach "perfection" by the "height of their care" in preparing the text. Their gift to such god-like patrons was not, for all that, they confessed, of much account, but "the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious, when they are dedicated to Temples."

¹ This Jaggard was the son of William Jaggard, the former pirate who had once published the "Passionate Pilgrim," attributing it to Shakespeare, and who, now established and a man of importance, enjoyed the title of printer to the city. Both father and son took part in the issuing of the Shakespeare folio, as shown by its colophon: "Printed at the Charges of W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, I. Smithweeke and W. Aspley, 1623."

In a humorous preface, addressed "to the great Variety of Readers, from the most able, to him that can but spell," the two actors acknowledged the right of the public "to read and censure" the book, provided they would "buy it first." They observed, however, that any among them who might be "a magistrate of wit, and sit on the stage at Black-Friers or Cock-Pit, to arraign Playes dailie," should not forget that the works now collected had had "their triall alreadie and stood out all Appeales." A favourable judgment was the more to be expected that readers had been previously "abus'd with diverse stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious imposters"; and at present the plays were, on the contrary, shown to view "cur'd and perfect of their limbes . . . absolute in their numbers." The two friends added thereupon their well-known praise of Shakespeare's extraordinary facility, so great, indeed, "that wee have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." By which they did not mean that, at the time they went to print, they actually had autograph manuscripts in their hands, but merely that they had seen such and knew what they were like. As a matter of fact, their compilation, as is only too obvious, was made sometimes from the earlier quartos, sometimes from such copies as the troupe possessed or they were able to secure, and as, at that date, these texts were sometimes copies of copies, the folio of 1623 gives for certain plays, "Midsummer Night's Dream" for instance, a text far less good than that of the quartos, published earlier from older manuscripts.

The editors, according to custom, had asked their friends to preface the book with poems in praise of the author; they published thus, besides the lines on the portrait, four eulogies, the first and most important by Ben Jonson, who celebrates, as is meet, "his beloved,

the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us." The "sweet swan of Avon," the "gentle Shakespeare," has outshone Lyly, Kyd and Marlowe, and though he had "small Latine and lesse Greeke," he has equalled all that

Insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

Always penetrated with classical ideas, Jonson ends by placing his friend among the constellations in heaven, and in invoking him as the "Starre of poets."

Old Ben, in writing thus, believed he was exaggerating, in accordance with the rules of this kind of poem.¹ He said elsewhere what he really thought of his friend's merits. He never suspected that he had done nothing here but express, and even very modestly, what posterity would think of the poet to whom, as he wrote, "all scenes of Europe homage owe."

After these eulogies, came the "Catalogue of the severall Comedies, Histories and Tragedies" contained in the volume, then the list "of the principall Actors in all these Playes,"

¹ He must have believed it especially when rendering, though with some reserve, homage to Shakespeare's *art* :

Yet must I not give Nature all : Thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter Nature be,
His art doth give the fashion . . .
. . . A good poet's made, as well as borne,
And such wert thou.

We know that, on this matter of art, Jonson, when it was no longer a question of official eulogy, but of expressing simply his opinion, said "that Shakespeer wanted arte" ("Conversations with Drummond"). Shakespeare himself spoke as if, in his hours of despondency, he felt such a want :

Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope.

(Sonnet xxix.)

Cf. below, p. 380, and "Jonson's views on Shakespeare's art," in the Stratford Shakespeare, vol. x. 1907.

Shakespeare himself and Burbage at their head. All the names are, of course, men's names, the poet having died without ever seeing a woman in the parts of Cleopatra, Desdemona, Juliet, or of any of his heroines. Finally came the dramatic works complete, save "Pericles," which was inserted only in the third edition. "Troilus" seems to have been added, as an afterthought, in the first; it is not mentioned in the table of contents, and is printed on unpagcd leaves as the first of the "Tragedies."

The revising of proofs, in spite of the emphatic statements of the two players as to "their care and painc," had been most negligently done, and the typographical errors are numerous. The paging is quite erratic, numbers following each other sometimes thus: 49, 58, 51, 52, or thus: 46, 49, 50; page 100 in the "Histories" section is followed by a new series of numerals beginning with 69, and so on. Great, however, is the gratitude due to the editors, printers and publishers for the compilation of this famous book, to-day the most coveted that be, and which has saved many a play, left in manuscript, from total loss. Out of thirty-six dramas included in the collection, only sixteen had been printed before.

About six hundred copies, according to the most recent estimate, were issued, the price being one pound. Only in the eighteenth century did the value of the book begin to rise, three guineas being often what it sold for; Garrick paid for his copy £1 16s. One hundred and seventy-three copies, of which fourteen alone are perfect, are at present known to have survived.¹

¹ Sidney Lee, "Shakespeare's Comedies (etc.). A supplement to the . . . facsimile of the 1st folio ed. . . . containing a census of extant copies," Oxford, 1902, fol., pp. 7 and 8; "Notes and Additions to the Census," in the *Library*, April, 1906, and my letter to the *Athenæum*, August 8, 1908. See also Mr. Lee's excellent "Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies, being a reproduction in facsimile of the first folio edition, 1623, from the Chatsworth copy," Oxford, 1902, fol.; important

The book met with a fair amount of success, nothing more. Prynne, it is true, in his wrath against theatres, authors and actors, descants on its good sale, but he not improbably exaggerates: "Some play-books," says he, "since I first undertooke this subject"—in the margin: "Ben Johnsons, Shackspeers and others"—"are grown from *quarto* into *folio*; which yet beare so good a price and sale, that I cannot but with grieffe relate it," and an indignant note in the margin is to the effect that "Shackspeers plaies are printed in the best crowne paper, far better than most Bibles."¹ John Johnson, another moraliser, attributes to Shakespeare in 1641 a large public, but especially of women, and he places the poet's works in "Love's Library": "There was also Shakespeere who, as Cupid informed me, creepes into the women's closet about bed time, and if it were not for some of the old out-of-date grandames, who are set over the rest as their tutoresses, the young sparkish girles would read in Shakespeere day and night."²

introduction, supplying the best and most complete account of the book and the circumstances attending its publication.

The Paris National Library possesses a copy of the first folio, with MS. notes in the margin of the table of contents, giving the opinion of a former owner, apparently an Englishman of the time of Dryden, concerning the merits of the "Comedies": seven are pronounced nothing better than "indifferent"; "Midsummer" and "Taming" are described as "pretty good"; four, "Merry Wives," "Merchant," "As you like it," and "Twelfth Night," are "good"; "Tempest" is "better in Dryden."

¹ "Histrio-Mastix. The Players Scourge," 1633, "To the Christian Reader"; "Centurie of Prayse," 1879, p. 195.

² "The Academy of Love, describing ye folly of younge men and ye fallacy of women," 1641; "Centurie of Prayse," p. 238. That the venture of Jaggard and Blount had a fair share of success is shown also by the Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1647 (published, however, at a time when the printing of such works was, for the public, a sort of compensation for the impossibility of seeing them on the stage), being an avowed imitation of the Shakespeare one. It was dedicated to the then Earl of Pembroke (the Montgomery of the Shakespeare volume) by the players who edited the work: "Directed by the example of some, who once steered in our qualitie, and so fortunately aspired

However that may be, a second folio edition of the great dramatist's works was given only nine years after the first, in 1632; a third, thirty-one years after the second, in 1663, re-issued in 1664 with seven plays more, of which six are spurious, the seventh being "Pericles"; a fourth, with the same additions, in 1685. Among the new poems prefacing the second folio figured unsigned lines, the name of whose author, then quite young, became known when he reprinted them in his first volume of verse, published in 1645 under the title of "Poems of Mr. John Milton."

Shakespeare's fame, which to-day fills the world, crossed the sea tardily, and, moreover, grew but slowly in his own country. No one could be found, at the present day, writing about the greatest English poets, and forgetting Shakespeare; many could in the seventeenth century: "You cannot see a mountain near," said Emerson. William Browne bestows, in his "Britannia's Pastorals," poetical praise on Chapman, Drayton, Sidney, Brooke, Daniel, Wither, Davies, Spenser, on Jonson the equal of Seneca, and even on the French dramatist Robert Garnier, but has not a word for Shakespeare.¹

Edmund Bolton devotes a section of his "Hypercritica," written about 1618,² to the English authors worthiest of note and imitation. He excludes some whose English is not "prattick" enough, such as Chaucer, "Piers Plowman," Lydgate, Skelton, Spenser (making an exception for his Hymns), but he names with praise Chapman, Daniel though "somewhat aflat," Drayton, Queen Elizabeth, Southwell, Constable, Dyer, Gascoigne, Sackville, Surrey, Wyatt, Raleigh, Donne, Hugh Holland, Greville "in his

to choose your Honour joyned with your (now glorified) brother, patrons to the flowing compositions of the then expired sweet swan of Avon, Shakespeare."

¹ Book ii. song 2, 1st ed. 1616.

² Text in Spingarn, "Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century," 1908, vol. i. pp. 109 ff.

matchless 'Mustapha,'" and above all, "that vital, judicious and most practical language of Benjamin Jonson's Poems." His list being concluded, he observes: "I hope now that no man will be so captious or ungentle as to make it a matter of quarrel to me, if I have left out any other, for want of memory or knowledge." Let us not therefore be so "captious" as to suggest that possibly Shakespeare was not unworthy of being mentioned too.¹

Peacham prints in 1622 his "Compleat Gentleman," and gives in it an account of English literature, from Joseph of Exeter, Chaucer and Gower, to the "golden age" of Elizabeth, and omits Shakespeare. Herrick visits, in thought, "Elizium," and meets there the great poets of past and present times, among whom some English dramatists, Beaumont, Fletcher and Jonson, not Shakespeare.² Heylyn, in his "Cosmographie," gives a list of famous English writers, from Chaucer and Gower to Beaumont, Fletcher and "my friend Ben Jonson, equal to any of the antients for the exactness of his pen," and forgets Shakespeare.³ No less a man than Addison publishes, in 1694, his "Account of the greatest English Poets," naming with praise, among others, Chaucer, Spenser, Cowley, Milton, Congreve, Dryden—

Great Cowley then (a mighty genius) wrote—

but naming not Shakespeare. Samuel Shephard observes, in 1651, that Shakespeare's glory, far from increasing, is,

¹ Shakespeare was not forgotten, but purposely left out, for, in a draft of his Section IV. which has come down to us, Bolton had mentioned Shakespeare and Beaumont, but he suppressed their names in his definitive text.

² "The Apparition of his Mistresse," "Hesperides," 1648; ed. Saintsbury, 1893, i. p. 267.

³ He concludes his enumeration thus: "Others there are as eminent . . . of whom, as being still alive, I forbear to speak," thus showing that he is not conscious of having omitted any of eminence among the dead. "Cosmographie in foure Bookes," London, 1666, fol., p. 304 (1st ed. 1652).

as it seems to him, fading : before those "true sonnes of Hyperion," Beaumont and Fletcher,

His sun quite shrunk beneath a cloud.¹

For a long while, his most determined admirers judged it easy to improve his plays : the process was the same as that used, at the time of the Renaissance, by Sigismund Malatesta to transform into a Greek temple the Gothic church at Rimini, both buildings remaining, one within the other, shackled together by the will of the prince. Dryden, the main promoter of Shakespeare's fame at the Restoration, places him above Jonson, which is remarkable for the time, but only just above, and not without some hesitation : "At least his equal, perhaps his superior."² He praises him, at times, in magnificent terms, but transforms the "*Tempest*" into a ridiculous phantasmagoria, and confides to us that he "never writ anything with more delight."³

Left thus at the disposal of any one who chooses, the great man's works serve as a quarry, freely exploited ; the lesser dramatists outdo each other in borrowing his plots or his characters, pulling down his dramas and rebuilding them to great advantage, as they think. One after the other, his plays reappear on the stage, transformed ; and if the remodellers acknowledge, as a rule, in their prefaces, that the old play is a masterpiece, it is to add immediately that it is much more so thanks to their improvements. Shakespeare, says Shadwell, "never

¹ "Epigrams, Theological," etc., 1651 ; "Centurie of Prayse," p. 287.

² "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," ed. Nichol Smith, 1900, p. 51 ; cf. pp. 53, 54. Shakespeare, "who many times has written better than any poet, in any language," is nevertheless "the very Janus of poets ; he wears almost everywhere two faces, and you have scarce begun to admire the one, ere you despise the other."—"Defence of the Epilogue"; W. P. Ker, "Essays of John Dryden," Oxford, 1900, 2 vols. 8vo, vol. i. p. 172.

³ Preface of "*Tempest*," acted 1667, written by him and Davenant. Cf. Langbaine, "Account of Dramatick Poets," 1691, p. 453.

made more masterly strokes than in [*Timon*]; yet I can truly say I have made it into a play."¹ Sir William Davenant, who allowed it to be said that he was the son of Shakespeare and of the wife of an Oxford vintner (this last point alone was incontestable), distinguished himself by adding dances to "*Macbeth*," and these embellishments were so in accordance with the tastes of the period that Mr. Pepys went to see the play, returned a second time, and yet once again, always with renewed pleasure: "Though I have seen it often, yet it is one of the best plays for a stage, and variety of dancing and musique that ever I saw."² The same Davenant fused into a single drama "*Measure for Measure*" and "*Much Ado*," while Otway, turning to "*Romeo and Juliet*," drew from it an unexpected "*Caius Marius*."³ Beaumont and Fletcher, Dryden tells us, continued, in his day, to far outshine Shakespeare: "Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's,"⁴ and that in spite of the zeal of Betterton, passionately fond of Shakespeare, and whose acting of *Hamlet* drew the whole town.

¹ Preface to his "*Timon . . . the man hater*." Same unceremoniousness in Cibber, who remodels "*King John*," and, dedicating it later to Chesterfield, writes: "I have endeavour'd to make it more like a play than what I found it in Shakespeare" (February, 1745). Innumerable remakings of Shakespeare's plays in the works of Dryden, Davenant, Gildon, d'Urfey, Lacy, Crowne, Nahum Tate, Ravenscroft, Otway, Dennis, etc. The tastes of the day made, it must be said, some such rejuvenating indispensable. Evelyn writes in his diary, "I saw '*Hamlet*' . . . played, but now the old plays begin to disgust this refined age" (November 26, 1661).

² "Diary," April 19, 1667.

³ Performed in 1680, founded on Plutarch and Shakespeare; prologue acknowledging, in humblest terms, Otway's debt to Shakespeare:

And from the crop of his luxuriant pen,
E'er since succeeding poets humbly glean.

⁴ "Essay of Dramatic Poetry," 1st ed. 1668, ed. Nichol Smith, p. 53.

In the eighteenth century the great current begins to form. Addison makes up for his omission by quoting, discussing, or praising Shakespeare in several numbers of the *Spectator*, and mocking the proud critics who cannot admire anything that has delighted everybody: "Our critics do not seem sensible that there is more beauty in the works of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art, than in those of a little genius who knows and observes them."¹ Editions multiplied, and after a while, it was no longer a mere question of reprinting, but of collating, comparing, elucidating; exegesis began, and the text was treated as a national classic. The example was set by Nicholas Rowe, the dramatist, who, if he did little for the text, was the first to attempt a real biography of the poet.² One after the other, the literary kings of the period, Pope and Dr. Johnson, each gave an edition; the first, in six splendid volumes, well printed on beautiful laid paper, with a superb (fancy) portrait by Vertue, an "index of the characters, sentiments, speeches, and descriptions in Shakespeare," and a preface wherein it is said that the poet is the greatest of dramatists, but that, unfortunately, as he never knew the ancients, he abstained from rivalling them; he improved, however, "when his performances had merited the protection of his prince."³ Dr. Johnson published his edition in 1765, and, in his turn, sounded the praise of the dramatist, but, writing at a time when minds were sick of the license of the former age, he never wearied of observing in Shakespeare that defect, "to which may be imputed most of the evil in

¹ September 10, 1714.

² Prefacing his edition of the "Works . . . adorned with cuts," London, 1709, 6 vols. 8vo.

³ "The Works of Shakespeare . . . collated and corrected . . . by Mr. Pope," London, 6 vols. 4to, vol. i. dated 1725, the others 1723; portrait dated 1721.

books or men: he sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose"¹—a train of thought resumed later, and developed by Emerson.²

Nevertheless the current is formed; in vain do such influential personages as Gibbon, Hume, and Chesterfield hesitate or protest;³ the flood increases, editions follow one upon the other and find countless readers: second edition by Pope, in 1728; edition by Theobald, in 1733, one of the most conscientious, with cleverest emendations; by Sir Thomas Hanmer in 1744; by Pope and Warburton, the worst of all, in 1747. Blair, in 1753, comes to the help of the simple by giving one "in which the beauties observed by Pope, Warburton, and Dodd are pointed out."⁴ Capell produces a carefully prepared text in 1768; Johnson gives, in 1773, a new edition with valuable contributions from G. Steevens; Ayscough another in 1790, "to which is now added a copious index to the remark-

¹ As for himself, Johnson had tried to enhance the value of his Dictionary by his choice of examples, selecting, he said, quotations which "should be useful to some other end than the illustration of a word."

² "He converted the elements which waited on his command into entertainments. He was master of the revels to mankind. . . . As long as the question is of talent and mental power, the world of men has not his equal to show. But when the question is of life, and its materials, and its auxiliaries, how does he profit me? . . . what signifies another picture more or less?"—"Shakespeare, or the Poet," in "Representative Men."

³ "That taste [for the French Theatre] has perhaps abated my idolatry for the gigantic genius of Shakespeare which is inculcated from our infancy as the first duty of an Englishman."—Gibbon, "Memoirs of my Life." Hume blames in Shakespeare "his total ignorance of all theatrical art and conduct" (chap. on manners, etc., at the end of his account of the reign of James I., 1754). "Il faut convenir que le théâtre français l'emporte en tout genre sur tous les autres et même sur les anciens, avec tout le respect que je leur dois."—Chesterfield, 1748, "Miscellaneous Works," ed. Maty, 1777, vol. ii.

⁴ Edinburgh, 8 vols., 2nd ed. 1771. Dr. Dodd, who was hanged for forgery in 1777, had published with great success, "The Beauties of Shakespeare: regularly selected from each play," London, 1752, 2 vols. 12mo.

able passages and words."¹ Malone, in the same year, publishes the "Plays and Poems of W. Shakespeare," the fruit of considerable research and the most important edition yet seen for the historical and literary information it contains.² Countless other texts, illustrated, expurgated, annotated, to meet every taste and every want, are printed during the same century; the time when nine years, when thirty-one years, would elapse between two editions is passed for ever.

Critical works, too, multiply; Shakespeare's name is no longer forgotten in any literary treatise, but, on the contrary, is to the fore; that sign of importance and literary fame is not refused to the dramatist: battle rages around his name. Are the works so good? Are they so bad? Was he right not to observe the rules? Was he wrong? Was he not a man of deep learning? Was he not one of deep ignorance? Was he moral, immoral, or a-moral? Is this a beauty or a misprint? What did he mean by, "Put out the light, and then put out the light?" We should ask his ghost, Fielding suggests. The ghost answers: "When two meanings of a passage can in the least balance our judgments which to prefer, I hold it matter of unquestionable certainty that neither of them is worth a farthing."³

Some of the liveliest debates still going on at the present hour are fairly started, the signal having been given, towards the end of the seventeenth century, by Thomas Rymer, best and most gratefully remembered now by every student as the editor of the "*Fœdera*."

¹ Forming alone a large volume of nearly 700 pages; Pope's index filled only 30 pages.

² "The Plays and Poems of W. Shakespeare . . . with an essay on the chronological order of his plays, an essay relative to Shakespeare and Jonson . . . and notes by E. Malone," London, 1790, 10 vols. 8vo. The Boswell ed. of the same appeared in 1821, 21 vols. 8vo.

³ "A Journey from this World to the Next," 1743, chap. viii.

His onslaught on Shakespeare did more than the very praise of Dryden to draw attention to the author of that "bloody farce without salt," "Othello."¹ Immediately answered by Gildon and Dennis,² and later, with infinitely more power, by Dr. Johnson,³ Rymer, who had translated Rapin and belonged to the neo-classical faith, set afloat some ideas which, confuted or expanded, continue still afloat, some of them having been taken up only yesterday by that modern Rymer, Count Leo Tolstoy, he, too, best and most gratefully remembered for works of a different kind.⁴

¹ "A Short View of Tragedy: its Original, Excellency and Corruption, with some reflections on Shakespear and other practitioners for the Stage," London, 1693, chap. v.; reprinted by Spingarn, with notes and comments, in his "Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century," Oxford, 1901, vol. ii.

² John Dennis, "The Impartial Critick, or some observations upon . . . 'A Short View of Tragedy'," 1693; Charles Gildon, "Some Reflections on Mr. Rymer's Short View," in his "Miscellaneous Letters and Essays," 1694. Gildon, however, expressed, in some of his later works, a far from unmixed admiration for Shakespeare: "The highest praise we can justly give our magnified Shakespeare is only that he was a great master of dialogues, but not that of a tragic poet."—"The Complete Art of Poetry," London, 1718, 2 vols. 12mo, dial. iv. p. 222. Dennis's admiration did not prevent him either from remodelling the "Merry Wives" and "Coriolanus" so as to make them more regular.

³ Who wrote, for example, with his usual good sense, concerning Shakespeare's neglect of the unities: "The truth is that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage and that the players are only players. . . . The different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily, which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?"—Preface to his edition of Shakespeare's works, 1765.

⁴ "J'estime que Shakespeare ne peut être tenu, non seulement pour un grand et génial écrivain, mais même pour un très médiocre."—Tolstoy, "Shakespeare; traduit du Russe par J. W. Bienstock," Paris [1907], p. 5. According to Tolstoy, "'Othello,' qui est peut-être le meilleur drame de Shakespeare, ou le moins mauvais, n'est qu'un tissu de paroles emphatiques," p. 77. According to Rymer, "From all the tragedies acted on our English stage, 'Othello' is said to bear the bell away," yet it is an execrable play, "Shakespeare alters it from the original in several particulars, but always, unfortu-

The problem of Shakespeare's learning was also discussed with the peculiar acrimony which questions of dogma usually inspire: Upton and Zachary Grey held him to be full of knowledge; Peter Whalley believed that he had much, but not quite so much; Richard Farmer denied him any, and the ball set running still runs to and fro, the Upton tradition having been recently renovated and improved upon.¹

On the stage, as in the library, Shakespeare was enjoying now a growing fame, thanks especially to Garrick, one of the earliest high priests of his cult, and the most fervent apostle of his religion. Garrick built a temple to his "god," and he organised in 1769 the famous Stratford Jubilee that exasperated Voltaire, but delighted Suard, "a ceremony," the latter said, "worthy of ancient Athens." As he was addressing the actor himself, Suard politely added: "A great man, doubtless, Shakespeare is, but without David Garrick, William Shakespeare would be many an inch less tall."² As for Garrick, he was sincere in his worship; writing to a

nately, for the worse."—"Short View," p. 87. Count Tolstoi deems, in the same way, that events and characters are much better "dans la nouvelle."

¹ John Upton, "Critical Observations on Shakespeare," 1746, 2nd ed. 1748.—Peter Whalley, "Enquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare," 1748.—Zachary Grey, "Critical, Historical and Explanatory Notes on Shakespeare," 1754.—Richard Farmer, "Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare," 1766, 2nd ed. 1767, "with large additions," and a preface in which the author humorously describes his pamphlet as "an answer to everything that shall hereafter be written on the subject." Certain it is that some of his remarks have not lost all appropriateness: "How would the old Bard have been astonished to have found that he had very skilfully given the *trochaic dimeter brachycatalectic* . . . to the witches in 'Macbeth'; and that now and then a halting verse afforded a most beautiful instance of the *Pes proceleusmaticus*!" p. 8 (an allusion to Upton). Cf. J. C. Collins, "Studies in Shakespeare," p. 62.

² "Oh! que j'ai regretté de n'être pas à Stratford sur Avon quand vous y avez célébré le jubilé de Shakespeare! C'était une fête digne de l'ancienne Athènes. . . . C'est sans doute un grand homme que Shakespeare, mais sans David Garrick, William Shakespeare aurait bien des pouces de moins."—July, 1770, "Correspondence of David Garrick," 1831, vol. ii. p. 569.

young player, he thus advises him : " Above all, never let your Shakespeare be out of your hands or your pocket ; keep it about you as a charm."¹ Imbued, however, like his contemporaries, with classical ideas, and acting unawares like Sigismund Malatesta, he built his temple in Greek style, to honour one whose works were, according to Pope, as " an ancient majestic piece of Gothic architecture."² Obeying again the same disposition, Garrick altered the great man's text without scruple, out of love for him : it was, he considered, only veiling his nudity. The alterations were sometimes so considerable (" Lear " had a happy ending) that the versions he produced have been included in the editions of his own works, where, indeed, they are more in their place than in Shakespeare's.³

On the continent, the movement had been naturally slower still. Some Shakespearian plays seem to have been acted in Germany, by English troupes, as early as 1626, but without any one knowing the author's name.⁴ France, entirely given then to classical ideas, and feeling but scant interest in any foreign literature save the Italian and Spanish ones, was nevertheless, the first, among continental nations, to recognise that a place was due to Shakespeare in the literature of the world. The oldest judgment passed on Shakespeare, out of England, is a French one. It is, as I have

¹ Letter to Powell, December 12, 1764, " Correspondence," i. p. 178.

² Preface to Pope's edition of " The Works of Shakespear," London, 1725, p. xxiii.

³ " Dramatic Works of David Garrick," 1798, 3 vols. 8vo. In " Midsummer," become " The Fairies," all the comic part disappears ; in " Winter's Tale," become " Florizel and Perdita," the three first acts are suppressed, and so on.

⁴ We find, at least, in the catalogue of anonymous plays performed that year in Dresden, titles similar to those of Shakespeare's dramas, and though we cannot be absolutely sure that they were actually his, they most probably were. See A. Cohn, " Shakespeare in Germany," 1865, 4to, p. cxv.

shown elsewhere, that of Nicolas Clément, librarian to Louis XIV., who, between 1675 and 1684, in cataloguing his master's books, firstly furnishes proof that the Grand Roi possessed the second folio edition of Shakespeare's works, which is already curious in itself; then adds his opinion on the book and its author: "This English poet has a somewhat fine imagination; his thoughts are natural, his words ingeniously chosen; but these happy qualities are obscured by the filth he introduces into his comedies." This appreciation remained, it is true, in manuscript until I found and published it.¹ But the oldest judgments printed abroad, showing a personal knowledge of the poet's works, are also French, and several are due to the greatest writers of the time: criticism of the *Journal littéraire* in 1717, praise of Shakespeare by the Abbé Prévost in his "Mémoires d'un Homme de Qualité," and analyses of his plays in his paper the *Pour et Contre*; ² verdict of

¹ *Revue Critique*, November 14, 1887. The genius of the English for tragic drama had been, however, publicly praised in France as early as 1674. Writing at this date, that staunch defender of rules, Father Rapin, had said: "Les peuples qui paroissent avoir le plus de génie pour la tragédie sont les Anglois, et par l'esprit de leur nation qui se plaist aux choses atroces, et par le caractère de leur langue qui est propre aux grandes expressions."—"Reflexions sur la Poétique d'Aristote," p. 201. Fouquet, the Superintendent of Finances, possessed, like Louis XIV., one of the early folios of Shakespeare's works. He kept it, truth to say, in his garret, in company with the works of those out of fashion writers Ronsard and Du Bartas: "Inventaire . . . des livres trouvés à Saint-Mandé, appartenant à ci-devant Monsieur Fouquet," 1665; "livres in folio qui se trouvent dans le grenier . . . Shakespeares Comédies angloises." The experts who drew the inventory value the Shakespeare volume at 1 franc; if it was the first folio, it would be worth now at least fifty thousand.—MS. Fr. 9,438 at the Paris National Library.

² The "Mémoires" came out from 1728 to 1731; the paper was founded in 1733; the numbers cxciv. ff., which appeared in 1738, contain warm praise of Shakespeare, and the analysis of "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Tempest," etc.: "Sa manière de penser étoit naturellement si élevée qu'elle n'avoit pas besoin d'être réformée par le secours de la méthode. . . . C'est au tribunal du bon sens qu'il faut le citer" (vol. xiv. p. 31). Translations of the *Spectator* into French had already served to make Shakespeare known;

Voltaire in his famous "Lettres Philosophiques," which had five editions in one year (1734), whose influence was immense, and where he concludes: "The poetic genius of the English is, up to now, like a bushy tree, planted by Nature, throwing out a thousand branches, and growing unsymmetrically with strength. It dies if you try to force its nature and to clip it like one of the trees in the Marly gardens"; a wise remark, which Garrick—and Voltaire himself—would have done well to remember.

The first attempt at a methodical translation of Shakespeare's works was also a French attempt, being that of La Place in 1745,¹ who celebrated in his preface Shakespeare's genius and, contrary to Pope, defended, as Prévost had done before him, his liberties and his disdain of rules: "Are the limits of genius known to us? . . . Let us refrain from condemning unreservedly now what our descendants will perhaps one day applaud." One after the other, French literary gazettes interested their readers in Shakespeare's works; later only Lessing began, in Germany, from 1758, to expose his methods, explain his genius, and celebrate his glory.²

From the middle of the eighteenth century, the admiration for Shakespeare grows ceaselessly in all countries, in France with Le Tourneur and Ducis, in Germany with those commanding spirits Lessing and Goethe, in Russia with Catherine the Great who transforms the "Merry

the first time his name appears in the text, the translator had added this note: "Il a écrit des tragédies dont la plupart des scènes sont admirables, mais il n'est pas tout à fait exact dans ses plans ni dans la justesse de la composition." "Pas tout à fait" certainly denotes a friendly disposition.—*Le Spectateur*, 1714, i. 84. On German judgments on Shakespeare, written in Latin in 1694 and 1702, but merely reproducing English ones, see T. G. Robertson, *Modern Language Review*, i. 313.

¹ "Le Théâtre Anglois"; the first four volumes are devoted to complete translations or analyses of Shakespeare's plays.

² See, e.g., the *Journal de Trévoux*; seven articles, from Aug., 1745.

Wives" into a Russian comedy, describing it herself as "a free but weak adaptation from Shakespeare," and who writes a "Life of Rurik" and other historical dramas, "in imitation of Shakespeare," she says, "without the observation of the ordinary rules of the theatre."¹ In France, the violent attacks of Voltaire,² heartily sorry for having, in his youth, contributed to the propagation of the cult, did not for one moment retard its progress. He died, persuaded that he had vanquished the "monster," but he was replaced at the French Academy by Ducis, whose only titles to election were his adaptations of Shakespeare to the French stage.³

The rest is known to all: the enthusiasm of audiences never tired of applauding the poet's best interpreters, Mrs. Siddons, Kemble, Macready, Kean, Helen Faucit, Irving, Ellen Terry; the immense influence of Shakespeare's works on the romantic movement of 1830; the passionate admiration of Stendhal, Guizot, Hugo;⁴ the lectures delivered and societies founded to explain his plays; the reprints, translations, and performances, succeeding one another; the heroes and subjects of the great man's dramas made popular by every artist; in France, by Delacroix, Berlioz, Gounod, and many others. Everybody knows, too, how

¹ On "Catherine, élève de Shakespeare," see a curious article, by André Lirondelle, in the *Revue Germanique*, March, 1908.

² Especially after Le Tourneur had begun to publish, with the greatest success and by subscription, his complete translation, of which Louis XVI. had accepted the dedication, 1776, ff.

³ Ducis gave, transforming the plots and forcing them into the classical mould, "Hamlet," 1769; "Romeo," 1772; "Lear," 1783; "Macbeth," 1784; "Jean sans Terre," 1791; "Othello," 1792. Brizard and Talma were his most famous interpreters.

⁴ "Shakespeare, c'est la fertilité, la force, l'exubérance, la mamelle gonflée, la coupe écumante, la cuve à plein bord. . . . A ceux qui tâtent le fond de leur poche, l'inépuisable semble en démente. A-t-il bientôt fini? Jamais. Shakespeare est le semeur d'éblouissements. A chaque mot, l'image; à chaque mot, le contraste; à chaque mot, le jour et la nuit."—"William Shakespeare," by Victor Hugo, 1864, 3rd ed. 1867, p. 178.

Germany, encouraged by such examples as those of Lessing and Goethe, vied with England and America for the honour of best interpreting, best explaining, and best performing Shakespeare's plays, of producing the most learned criticisms, and having the most painstaking and active societies; how the editions have continued to multiply from year to year in both hemispheres, and the plays to be acted in all countries, even at the Antipodes, and in Japan, where Sada Yacco has won applause in the character of Portia; how finally specialists, really innumerable, have studied the various problems offered by the works, turning each one of the dramas over and over, seeking in them the solution of the greatest problems or of the least, comparing the Bible and Shakespeare, Christ and Shakespeare, Aristotle and Shakespeare,¹ studying separately his women, his fools, his flowers, his plants, his insects, his birds "critically examined, explained, and illustrated,"² his ghosts, fairies, and witches; also his religion, his medicine, his jurisprudence, his nautical and military talents. From his works have been drawn collections of tales,³ of witticisms, aphorisms, and even sermons.⁴ Counsels have been asked of him on the art of conducting one's life, of cultivating one's garden, and of angling.⁵

¹ Examples: J. B. Selkirk, "Bible Truths with Shakespearian Parallels," 1879; C. Wordsworth, "Shakespeare's Knowledge . . . of the Bible"; J. E. Riddle, "Illustrations of Aristotle . . . from the works of Shakespeare," 1832; C. Ellis, "The Christ in Shakespeare," 1898; W. Burgess, "The Bible in Shakespeare," Chicago, 1903, the author summing up his final judgment thus: "It seems that Shakespeare drank so deeply from the wells of Scripture that we may say, without any straining of evidence, without the Bible, Shakespeare could not be" (p. xiii.)—without any straining?

² "The Ornithology of Shakespeare," by J. E. Hurting, London, 1871, 8vo.

³ Notably Lamb's famous "Tales from Shakespeare, designed for the use of young persons," 1807. In French, as early as 1783, had appeared "Contes moraux, amusants et instructifs . . . tirés des tragédies de Shakespeare," by Perrin.

⁴ "The Poet Priest, Shakespearian Sermons," compiled by J. F. Timmins, n.d. [1883?].

⁵ "Shakespeare as an Angler," by H. N. Ellacombe, 1883.

"And beleeeve this," had written in 1609, one who did not believe it himself, "that when hee is gone and his Commedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set up a new English Inquisition."¹ The day thus prophesied has now come, the new Inquisition has been instituted and the "scrambling" has resulted in 10,000% being paid for the series of the first four folios last offered for sale.²

Shakespeare is on the stage, in libraries, in museums; he is to be met at concerts, in palaces, in hovels. His "Julius Cæsar" has been acted in our days in the Roman Theatre at Orange; the part of Hamlet has been performed at the Russian court by one of the same rank as the Prince of Denmark; in a hut of the American far-west, to while away the time during a snowstorm, "Hamlet" has been read aloud to a cow puncher by that sturdy ranchman who was to be later President Roosevelt.³ The dramatist's works are constantly quoted in parliamentary speeches, in private conversations, in books of all kinds; quantities of his verses have become axioms and proverbs; his name is more familiar than any other. A fame so immense is a phenomenon unique in literature.

¹ Preface to "Troilus and Cresseid," by "a never writer to an ever-reader," 1609.

² Purchase made by Mr. Marsden J. Perry of Providence, R.I., 1905.

³ A friendly act inspired by gratitude for the cow puncher's having helped the future President to recover a lost horse; the man's emotion was great: he requested certain passages to be read twice to him; Polonius's advice to Laertes seemed to him memorable, especially what the old man says about quarrels, a subject of particular interest to the listener. The "audience" was less pleased with the end of the play, and deemed that the exchange of rapiers was improbable. "Audience" shortly after thought it would be interesting to try and reach Patagonia on horseback, and started upon the journey, but was never heard of any more. Cf. the effect produced on Russian moujiks by "Lear," "Othello," and "Hamlet" being read to them (Marcel Delines in *Le Petit Temps*, March 31, 1907). Concerning the hesitation of Hamlet, one of the peasants said: "He cannot make up his mind, that's why he talks."

Passing through the streets of Florence, along the dark walls of her palaces, looking and remembering, the impression gains upon the traveller that, in this city of marvels, everything has been felt, understood, expressed. In it Dante was born, from it Petrarch received "*i cari parenti e l'idioma*"; here is the Palazzo Vecchio, with its tall windows and rough-hewn stones, the Strozzi Palace, square as a keep, with its huge doors fit for giants, the "*Loggia*" with Cellini's Perseus; and here, too, as chance may lead the visitor's steps, Botticelli's Spring, moist with dew, aglow with the light of the new-born day, Michael Angelo's marble Titans, Vinci's drawings; heroes and Madonnas; Giotto's campanile of inlaid marbles; pensive babes by della Robbia; princes and emperors, youthful and happy, going to adore the Infant-God through a park where angels with diapered wings feed peacocks among the roses; Venuses stretched upon their voluptuous couches, stern-eyed gonfaloniers, austere monks, saints by Angelico praying ceaselessly, upon the walls, for those living who know them no more, and the fountain of Neptune singing in the sunlight on the spot where rose Savonarola's pyre. . . .

From a distance, as one moves northward again, a doubt occurs, and at times the traveller questions whether the soul, the mind, the heart, remain as truly filled to overflowing as when one leaves that museum of the thoughts which have stirred mankind, the works of Shakespeare.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS OF SHAKESPEARE.

I.

WHEN he was second master at Westminster School, Camden was attracted to a studious, clever boy whose father had lost "all his estate under Queen Marie," had "turn'd minister," and died in poverty. The mother, marrying again, was now the wife of a bricklayer. The pupil, born, it is believed, in 1573, traced his origin to the Johnstons of Annandale, an old family of the Scottish border.¹ Destitute of resources, he tried, on leaving school, first his stepfather's craft—"mortar treader" his enemies called him later—then the military profession. He went to the wars in the Low Countries, returned to London about 1592, married "a wyfe who," said he, "was a shrew yet honest," and began, about 1595, a third kind of trade, that of player and author, especially author, under that name which he was not long in making famous of Ben Jonson.

From 1597, he figures in Henslowe's register, and he is named by Meres, the year after, as being, with Marlowe,

¹ A question of armorial bearings happily elucidated by Mr. Symonds has placed this origin beyond doubt.—"Ben Jonson," in the series "English Worthies," 1888, pp. 1, ff. Autobiographical information, in "Conversations with Drummond," Shakespeare Society, 1842, pp. 19, 29.

Shakespeare, and ten others, among "our best for tragedy." He writes for the Lord Admiral's players and quarrels with them, then for Shakespeare's troupe and quarrels with that, then for the diminutive actors at the Blackfriars, then for adults again. He has found his course, his character is definitively formed, with angles so sharp, ruts so deep, and gibbosities so protruding, that nothing will change it; such as he is now, such will he remain: in his plays, in his occasional poems, in his private notes found after his death, and which read like confessions, in his private talks, a mixture of avowals and challenges.¹

Tall, stalwart, of great, and even, towards the end, of enormous bulk, recalling, as he says himself, "the tun at Heidelberg," with "rockye face"² and curly hair, peremptory in his speech, a great eater and considerable drinker,

¹ See, e.g., "Notes of Ben Jonson's conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden, January, 1619," ed. David Laing, Shakespeare Society, 1842; "Timber or Discoveries, made upon men and matter: as they have flow'd out of his daily readings," posthumous, 1641; modern ed. by Schelling, Boston, 1892; by Gollancz, "Temple Classics"; by Castelain, with a minute study of the sources, Paris, 1906 (cf. Spingarn, "The Sources of Ben Jonson's Discoveries," in *Modern Philology*, April, 1905, and P. Simpson in *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, April, 1907, not forgetting that, whether he translates or not, Jonson records there his opinions or those he agrees with), also the remarkable series of his "Epigrams" and occasional poems. The prefaces, prologues, and epilogues to his plays also contain much autobiographical matter, valuable as showing his temper and revealing his ideas. The long-felt want of a critical edition of his works is about to be supplied (by Professor Herford and by Mr. P. Simpson). His plays are being, in the meantime, separately edited by the University of Yale ("Yale Studies in English," ed. A. S. Cook). The folio ed. of the "Workes," 1616, and the separate quartos, are being reproduced by W. Bang, Louvain, 1905, ff. The least unsatisfactory edition of the complete "Works" has been, up to now, that of Gifford and F. Cunningham, London, 1875, 9 vols. 8vo. Concerning the sources of the dramas, see Koepfel, "Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen Ben Jonson's, John Marston's und Beaumont's und Fletcher's," Leipzig, 1895. Amplest biography, that of Castelain, "Ben Jonson, l'homme et l'œuvre," Paris, 1907.

² "Underwoods," lxx; "Conversations with Drummond," Shakespeare Society, p. 89. At forty-six he speaks of his "mountaine belly."

he makes himself feared, hated, loved, according to circumstances. He cuts through life a deep, very visible furrow, and goes forth, as occasion wills, followed by a motley crew of idolaters or barkers, the first raising altars for him and the others pillories, some of the crew passing more than once from one camp to the other. Sincere, he always says what he thinks; brave, he fears the consequences of neither his words, his writings, nor his deeds. If he changes his mind he veers round completely; he is not for half-measures nor extenuations. We have from himself this strange anecdote: born a Protestant, converted to Catholicism in 1598, reconverted to Protestantism ten years later, at his next communion, in his enthusiasm and "in token of true reconciliation, he drank out all the full cup of wyne," meant for the whole congregation. He is quick at challenges: in Flanders he challenges a Spaniard, and kills him; in London he challenges Gabriel Spencer the player, and kills him; he challenges luck and Fate; two of his collaborators having, under James I., slipped into a play disparaging allusions to the Scots, he goes to prison with the guilty ones, as a volunteer, for example's sake, though he had had nothing to do with the objectionable passage; one of the two prisoners was Marston, erewhile his violent enemy. The list of his quarrels would be a long one: quarrels with the players for whom he wrote, with Marston and Dekker, whom he caricatured on the stage, and who repaid him in the same coin, a regular "*Poetomachia*," as Dekker called it; ¹ endless quarrels with Inigo Jones, with

¹ "*Poetaster or The Arraignment*," by Jonson, performed at the Blackfriars, 1601, by the children of the Queen's Chapel (a "company of horrible blacke Friars," said Dekker), as the author had quarrelled with Shakespeare's troupe; pr. 1602; mod. ed. by H. S. Mallory, "*Yale Studies*," New York, 1905; violent attacks on Marston (Crispinus), "*poetaster and plagiary*," whose pretentious style is mercilessly ridiculed, and Demetrius (Dekker), "*a dresser of plays about the town*," both represented as having turned against Horace (Jonson),

whom he had been composing court masques and entertainments; quarrels with the public, the spectators, readers, and critics; challenges to each and all, in prefaces, "inductions," prologues, where he never tired of saying the good he thought of himself and the contempt he felt for the ignorant, the dunces, all those with a literary ideal different from his or with none at all. Lastly, he expressed in most lively fashion his disdain for opinion: "I do not write for the crowd to admire me,"¹ which does not mean that, in his heart, he did not care for the crowd's admiration, far from it; but admiration must come to him spontaneously, and if it did not, he would try to extort it by dint of threats, not of compliments. Much better never be seen, never be read, than win a public by flatteries. "Thou," says he to his bookseller,

Thou that mak'st gain thy end, and wisely well,
Call'st a book good, or bad, as it doth sell,

not because they could discover any fault in such a model of all perfections, but because it was a means for them to advertise themselves: "it will get us a huge deal of money" (iii. 1). The play, supposed to take place in Roman times, is certainly not a good one; but, as usual, the observation of English contemporary manners gives value to a number of scenes and portraits.

Dekker answered vigorously in his "*Satiro-Mastix. Or The untrussing of the Humorous Poet.* As it hath bin presented publicly by the . . . Lord Chamberlaine his servants," *i.e.*, Shakespeare's troupe, at the Globe, "and privately by the children of Paules," performed autumn of 1601, pr. 1602. Dekker puts on the stage the same personages that Jonson did, but shows them under different colours: instead of all perfections Horace is, of course, all vices, and is satirised physically and morally, he and his "oven-mouth," his face "like a rotten russet apple, when 'tis bruiz'd," and his "strong garlick comedies."

¹ . . . Neque me ut miretur turba, laboro,
Contentus paucis lectoribus.

Lines adapted from Horace and used as an epigraph for his "*Alchemist*," 1612, and for his "*Workes*," 1616.

Use mine so too ; I give thee leave : but crave,
For luck's sake, it thus much favour have,
To lie upon thy stall, till it be sought ;
Not offer'd, as it made suit to be bought ;
Nor have my title-leaf on posts or walls,
Or in cleft-sticks. . . .¹

But if an occasion occurs to express publicly his own sentiment on his own writings, he extols his merits in the same high-sounding voice which he had just been using to ridicule "that common spawn of ignorance, our fry of writers," his rivals :

By — 'tis good, and if you lik't, you may.²

While he caricatures Marston under the features of Crispinus, he represents himself under those of Horace, or again of Crites, Arete's lover, "a creature of a most perfect and divine temper."³

He is exacting and surly ; he grumbles and threatens ; he is always sure that he is right and that, when defending his own ideas, he is performing an exalted duty and paying tribute to Reason. He is especially struck with his contemporaries' faults, vices, and oddities. His eye magnifies warts and deepens wrinkles ; he sees mankind uglier than it is, and he represents it as he sees it. A crude light, accentuating every shadow, plays on the faces of his characters in the numerous comedies in which, from 1597, he studied the foibles of the day—either in imaginary people, as in "Every Man in his Humour," "Every Man out of his Humour," "The Devil is an Ass," "The Staple of News," or in real ones which the audience could easily recognise, as in "Cynthia's Revels" and "The Poetaster."⁴

¹ Epigr. iii.

² Epilogue of "Cynthia's Revels" ; Prologue of "Poetaster."

³ "Cynthia's Revels," ii. 1.

⁴ "Every Man in his Humor," acted 1597, pr. 1601 ; ed. Wheatley, London, new impression, 1901 (cf. the anonymous imitation, "Every

He tries various styles: tragedy with "Sejanus," 1603, and "Catiline," 1611, and he wins by these meritorious works the applause of connoisseurs but not of the crowd; court masques and entertainments, with a splendid display of scenery, written by him in abundance after the accession of James I. This prince's reign was the most brilliant period of Jonson's career. He gave then his great comedies of "Volpone," about 1605, "Epicœne, or the Silent Woman," "The Alchemist," 1610, "Bartholomew Fair," 1614. The men of letters of greatest note all acknowledged his authority, and he created the earliest precedent for that literary kingship which after him devolved on Dryden, then on Pope, then on his quasi namesake, that other autocrat with a "mountaine belly, and rockye face," Dr. Johnson. On terms of friendship with the poets Donne, Beaumont, Fletcher, Chapman, Shakespeare, and later Herrick, he held also amicable intercourse with the principal historians, thinkers, and savants of his day, Camden, Selden, Raleigh, Bacon. A number of minor writers and beginners asked "to be sealed of the tribe of Ben."¹ The rule of the dramatist was so firmly established that it continued to be accepted even in the period of his decadence. When foreigners asked English people who was their great man of letters, they did not answer Shakespeare, but Jonson.² They

Woman in her Humour," pr. 1609; in Bullen's "Old English Plays," 1882, 4 vols. 4to); "Every Man Out of his Humor," acted 1599, pr. 1600: "As it was first composed by the Author B. I. Containing more then hath been publicly spoken or acted"; "The Fountaine of Selfe-Love. Or Cynthia's Revels," acted 1600, pr. 1601; "Poetaster," above, p. 371; "The Divell is an Asse," acted 1616, pr. 1631, ed. W. S. Johnson, New York, 1905; "The Staple of Newes," acted 1625, pr. 1631, ed. De Winter, New York, 1905.

¹ Jonson's "Epistle" to one such, "Underwoods," lxxv.

² Soon after his death, Pollard the bookseller's sign was "At Ben Jonson's head behinde the Exchange." Shakespeare was similarly honoured, but only in the eighteenth century, by the famous Tonson; he is now enjoying the

prefer him to Euripides, observed Saint-Amant, who visited England in 1631, and never heard of Shakespeare.¹

In June, 1618, Jonson started on foot from London and went to Scotland, where he was enthusiastically received by all who took an interest in literature; he was made a burgess of Edinburgh, and spent a few weeks at Hawthornden, the manor of the gentleman-poet, William Drummond. A less kindly Boswell than the one Jonson's quasi namesake had the good luck to fall in with, Drummond noted every night what had struck him most in the day's conversations; and that was mainly his guest's satirical traits and contemptuous remarks. When the Goncourts published their account of certain post-prandial talks among literary men, Taine, who had been one of the group, observed, "Yes, maybe all this was said, but if this only had been said, more than one among us would never have gone again." We must not forget that, sour as Jonson could be, he was not always sour, and that, in the freedom of conversations in an out-of-the-way place, excited probably by his host, and him-

honour again, in his own native town, thanks to Mr. A. H. Bullen, who has printed there one of the handsomest editions of the great writer's works, "At the Shakespeare Head Press," the signboard hanging in front of the quaint, well-preserved house of Julius Shawe, the poet's friend, and one of the witnesses to his will.

¹ Cataloguing, between 1675 and 1684, such works of Ben Jonson as Louis XIV. possessed, the royal Librarian Nicolas Clément made, according to his wont, mention of his opinion concerning the dramatist: "*Poeta Anglicus percelebris*," he says, adding in French this note (afterwards erased): "*Ce poète anglois est un des meilleurs, des plus retenus et des plus modestes*" (decent)—unpublished slips of Clément's catalogue, preserved at the National Library, Paris; cf. above, p. 363, Clément's verdict on Shakespeare. It turns out that the *Sun-King*, richer in English works than one would think, possessed Jonson's "*Workes*," in folio, 1640, 2 vols. and "*The New Inne*," 1631. Careful Clément adds a cross-reference to R. Waring's "*Carmen lapidarium Memorix Ben. Jonsoni*," as included in his "*Amoris Effigies*," 1668, also in the Royal Library.

self amused by the amusement he caused, he may have out-jonsoned Jonson. He certainly said a great many other things which, as they were not conspicuously strange or bitter, were not noted down by Drummond, and so we have in his pages a Jonson all "gall." The dramatist also returned on foot, taking his time and covering the distance in two months.

Towards the end of the reign the shadows grew longer and darker on the poet's road. A fire destroyed his library, his notes, his "journey to Scotland sung with all the adventures"; it was an irreparable loss. The playfulness of his "Execration upon Vulcan," one of his best occasional pieces, barely veils his real sorrow :

And why to me this? thou lame lord of Fire!
 What had I done that might call on thine ire?
 Or urge thy greedy flames thus to devour
 So many my years' labours in an hour?
 I ne'er attempted aught against thy life,
 Nor made the least line of love to thy loose wife.

If my collection of books had but resembled :

The learned library of Don Quixote !

If I could but have foreknown of thy wish for a "feast of fire," I would have provided food enough :

The whole sum
 Of errant knighthood, with the dames and dwarfs ;
 The charmed boats, and the enchanted wharfs,
 The Tristrams, Lancelots, Turpins, and the Peers,
 All the mad Rolands and sweet Olivers . . .¹

Under Charles I. the shadows grew darker still; his pensions from the king or from the city, of which he had been appointed "chronologer" (annalist), were irregularly paid; unable, all his life, to economise, having

¹ "Underwoods," lxi.

followed, besides, a scarcely profitable trade ("Of all his plays," he said to Drummond, "he never gained two hundred pounds"), he experienced in his later years want, neglect, illness, failure. Trying to write still, *invita Minerva*, in spite of age and infirmities—"the maker is sick and sad," he himself said—he gave to the public mediocre plays which his enemies declared pitiful, happy to take at last their revenge on an exhausted adversary. Charles I., of less learning, but of more brilliant mind than his father, provided some help from time to time, out of charity rather than sympathy; his own literary ideal was not Jonson, but Shakespeare, whose works he read over in his prison, to the great indignation of the Puritans. The old king of letters lingered obscurely till August 6, 1637: "Ben Jonson, who I thought had bene dead, . . ." J. Pory had written to a friend five years before.² He was buried at Westminster, in the Poets' Corner.

Jonson's great concern through life was literary art; he remained constantly faithful to principles which he had adopted from the first. Those principles were almost the reverse of Shakespeare's, just as Jonson's natural dispositions were nearly the opposite of the great dramatist's. On all occasions Jonson asserts his personality and Shakespeare keeps his out of view. The former, not only never lets any occasion for a quarrel pass without seizing it, but he looks out for such, he starts unexpected ones; it is one of his pleasures. The latter avoids them, and when he is confronted by any, pretends not to see; he answers nothing, passes judgment on no one, adheres strictly to his trade, which is his livelihood, writes no prefaces, publishes none of his plays, and leaves behind him,

¹ "The New Inn," acted 1629, Epilogue.

² To Sir Th. Puckering, September 20, 1632. Ellis "Original Letters," 2d. ser. iii. p. 270.

judging from the event, neither letters, nor notes, nor even a library, the composition of which might have thrown light on his private tastes. Jonson's opinions concerning men and things are, on the contrary, so pronounced and so notorious that we know them with certainty and in several ways, through him and through others. He is unable to imply or suggest anything; he is peremptory; be the question a capital or an insignificant one, whether he has had time for reflection or not, he decides. In his conversations, his notes or prose essays, his minor poems, some of which are masterpieces of wit and grace,¹ he renders arrets; "Arresta," our old jurists used to say, "quia sistendum est." When the bulky censor had delivered his sentence there was nothing to do but register it and keep silent, especially if he spoke after drinking;² and he drank much, and having drunk, spoke enormously—"lyric feasts," Herrick said in his famous apostrophe,

Made at the *Sun*,
The *Dog*, the *Triple Tunne*,
When we such clusters had
As made us nobly wild, not mad . . .³

"Lyric feasts," in which, wrote his enemies, he would "fling epigrams . . . or play-speeches about him like hail-stones";⁴ "lyric feasts" in which, especially towards the end, Jonson would at times strongly tax the patience

¹ Containing many of those condensed thoughts, expressed in a minimum of words, sharp and swift as arrows, such lines as will be the glory of Pope and his school. The Politick-Would-Bes, Jonson writes, are mysterious in everything,

And whisper what a proclamation says.

(Epigr. xcii.)

² "Especiallie after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth."—Drummond's note on Jonson, at the end of the "Conversations," p. 40.

³ "Works," ed. Saintsbury, ii. p. 99.

⁴ Dekker, "Satiro-Mastix"; "Works," 1873, i. 244.

even of his "sons" and tribesmen. "I was invited yesternight," wrote one of them, "to a solemn supper by Ben Jonson. . . . There was good company, excellent chear, choice wines, and jovial welcom. One thing interven'd, which almost spoyld the relish of the rest, that Ben began to ingross all the discourse, to vapour extremely of himself, and by villifying of others to magnifie his own Muse."¹

He had that authoritative tone of voice which makes listeners think: here are memorable statements which we should note. When Shakespeare spoke, people went away delighted and noted nothing. Jonson attached extreme importance to speech, to words impassioned and sincere like his own: "Language," he wrote, "most shows the man."² His whole face betrayed the importance what he said had in his eyes, and his sons' praise was loud, no less than his enemies' laughter. "By my troth, sweet ladies, it is cake and pudding to me," said Dekker, "to see his face make faces when he reads his songs and sonnets."³ That sense of ownership, so developed in Shakespeare when the question was of farms and fields, and not of plays or poems, Jonson had, on the contrary, in the highest degree when his literary works were concerned; no sort of men

¹ "Epistolæ Ho-Elizæ. Familiar Letters Domestic and Forren. By James Howell," 2nd ed. London, 1650, ii. p. 25, April 5, 1636. The anecdote shows that, even in his years of penury, Jonson had not changed, and when he happened to have any money, did not think of saving. Writing to Jonson, Howell addressed him as "Father Ben." He reported to him, in a letter of May 3, 1635, a "choice story" which a chance companion had told him "in coach from Paris to Rouen." The events had taken place "som hundred and odd years since." The number of odd years is not insignificant, as the story happens to have been that of the Sire de Coucy, who died in 1192, and whose tragical adventures were made the subject of many tales and romances, the best known being the one called "La Châtelaine de Vergy," thirteenth century. Contrary to what Howell imagined, this was the last kind of subject Jonson would have cared to treat.

² "Timber," cxxi.

³ "Satiro-Mastix"; "Works," 1873, i. 241.

were more heartily despised by him than the plagiarist or "poet-ape" who would "buy the reversion of old plays," make "each man's wit his own. . . . Told this, he slightes it."¹ As for himself, he was solicitous about his works, revised his texts before printing them, offered to the reading public a number of his plays, one by one, and even, and this was strange then and was much noticed, like all that he did, he collected them, and gave in 1616 the first volume of "*The Workes of Beniamin Jonson.*" Such a noble title for a mere collection of dramas!

. . . His were called works, where others were but plays!

wrote Suckling in his "Session of the Poets."²

Genius, eloquence, similar avocations, the frequenting of the same taverns brought together Shakespeare and Jonson, and their somewhat intermittent friendship survived all differences. But Jonson's literary ideas were, most of them, the very antipodes of Shakespeare's. While, with the latter, fantasy, lyrical imagination, independence, alertness, and fiery passion predominated, the other was for reason, observation, truth, accuracy, precedents, deliberation. One must write slowly, thought Jonson; a "laboured and accurate" style is the best style; nothing that has been quickly done will last long: "Things wrote

¹ "On Poet-Ape," Epigr. lvi.

² "Poems," ed. Hazlitt, i. 7. "My playes are not exposed unto the world in volumes to beare the title of *Workes* (as others)," wrote Th. Heywood, adding: "It never was any great ambition in me to bee in this kind voluminously read."—Preface to the "*English Traveller.*" While the "*Workes*" were being printed, Jonson went on, still revising and amending his text, his persistent care equalling Shakespeare's persistent indifference: "Not only," as W. W. Greg has pointed out, "did the volume in question undergo careful revision in proof, no doubt at the author's own hands, but after the bulk of the edition had been printed off, many further corrections and alterations, in some cases involving the resetting of whole pages, were made, which are only presented in a very few copies."—"List of Masques," 1902, p. xiii.

with labour deserve to be so read, and will last their age." ¹

For his great rival, no rules, no heed taken of the ancients, and little enough of the moderns, a keen desire to please, and consequently all satisfaction given to the tastes of the public, with a considerable place reserved for what is spectacular, dances, ghosts, monsters; for conceits, exaggerations, strange happenings; for sights fit to interest the multitude, and for some others which ought not to be shown them at all. With Jonson, a great veneration for the ancients and an intimate knowledge of their works, a hatred for the vain fondnesses of "the beast the multitude," and a particular pleasure in thwarting them; coarseness tolerated, lubricity forbidden; no "servant monster" as in "The Tempest," no fools, no scenes "in a bawdy house;" ² much patience, much trouble taken to correct, erase, and revise. "In this age (in these "jig-given times," he says elsewhere) . . . in plays . . . the concupiscence of dances and antics so reigns, as to run away from nature, and be afraid of her, is the only point of art that tickles the spectators. But how out of purpose and place do I name art? when the professors are grown so obstinate contemnors of it and presumers on their own naturals, as they are deriders of all diligence that way." ³ Writers

¹ "Timber," cv, cxxx. "So slow an inventor," said of Jonson the author of the "Returue from Parnassus," "that he were better betake himselfe to his old trade of bricklaying."—Part ii., 1601.

² "For my particular, I can, and from a most clear conscience affirm, that I have ever . . . loathed the use of such foul and unwashed bawdry as is now made the food of the scene."—Dedication of "Volpone," 1607. He hates,

With lewd, profane, and beastly phrase,
To catch the world's loose laughter, or vain gaze.

(Epigr. ii.)

³ Preface to the 1612 ed. of the "Alchemist." "The Winter's Tale," 1611, with its dance of "rustics habited like satyrs" and their "gallimaufry of gambols," was, if not the very play Jonson had in view, certainly one of the sort he was protesting against.

should be artists ; woe to those who "presume on their own naturals," even if these "are excellent ;"¹ woe to those who lack art ! "I deny not but that these men, who always seek to do more than enough, may some time happen on some thing that is good and great, but very seldom ; and when it comes it does not recompense the rest of their ill." I shall never rival such people ; I know full well they will ever obtain more suffrages than I : "For it is only the disease of the unskilfull, to think rude things greater than polished, or scattered more numerous than composed."² According to Jonson, a conscientious artist selects his words, considers the place best fitting each, avoids "metaphors far-fet" ; "the learned use ever election."³

Fantasy is a dangerous sprite, one that should not be trusted ; far better choose Truth as a Muse : historical truth if it be a question of the past ; minute, conscientious, personal observation if it be a question of the present. Such is Jonson's way of thinking, a way about which no one is allowed to have any doubt ; the wide world is kept informed, as it is concerning all his ways : "A meere Empyrick," his enemies call him, "one that gets what he hath by observation" ;⁴ "a mere sponge," he says himself, repeating their slanders, "he goes up and down sucking from every society, and when he comes home he squeezes himself dry again."⁵ His faith in the value of this rule is none the less absolute ; he logically deducts its consequences and acts accordingly : all must be submitted to personal observation, even those admirable ancients whom one should never tire of studying. He thus makes a rather broad allowance for modern necessi-

¹ "Timber," lxx.

² Preface to the quarto ed. of the "Alchemist," 1616.

³ "Timber," lxx, cxxx.

⁴ "Returne from Parnassus," 2nd part, 1601, i. 1.

⁵ "Poetaster," iv. 1.

ties and thoughts, a broader one than will be conceded by Boileau in his "Art Poétique" or made use of by Addison in his "Cato." "I know nothing," Jonson said, "can conduce more to letters than to examine the writings of the ancients, and not to rest in their sole authority, and take all upon trust from them. . . . We have our own experience. . . . It is true they opened the gates and made the way, that went before us, but as guides, not commanders." The rule is a truly golden one; nothing above experience; nothing more beneficent, it leads the artist to his supreme goal:

Experience breedeth art; lack of experience, chance.¹

Some have wondered whether, according to dates, this or that among Jonson's remarks could apply to this or that of Shakespeare's plays. The problem is of little interest. Whether it be late or early that Jonson gave, in those of his writings which have come down to us, his opinion on the various elements of the Shakespearian system, one thing is certain, namely, that from first to last he heartily disapproved of them all. In some cases the Shakespearian play was recent, and the allusion to the great rival is certain; in other cases, no less curious, it seems to be foresight, he blames in advance. The fact is that he blames a school, a group, to which Shakespeare belonged, and devices which Shakespeare had used or was sure to use.

¹ "Timber," xxi; "English Grammar," Preface. Cf. Jonson's views as expressed by Cordatus in "Every Man out of his Humour," Induction. Mr. P. Simpson has shown that the passage in "Timber" is translated from Vives (*Modern Language Rev.*, April, 1907); it none the less makes us acquainted with Jonson's views; as previously stated, he inscribed in his notebook passages he approved of, and they give us his opinions as certainly as if he had not been borrowing. That this is really so is, in the present occasion, made evident by the other passages in his works just referred to, where he repeats, in his own name, similar statements.

Even in the more material question of the choice of plots, Jonson has views the reverse of Shakespeare's; he derides those poets who draw the subject of their plays from any hackneyed tale or drama, and "waylay all the stale apothegms or old books they can hear of in print or otherwise, to farce their scenes withal . . . as if their imagination lived wholly upon another man's trencher";¹ a thing that Shakespeare never scrupled to do. Jonson, with a less fertile mind, a slower pen, but with an obstinate will, prides himself on avoiding such easy practices and on inventing the plot of his comedies, as well as, rarest of all, the very jests in them. His Muse

. . . Shuns the print of any beaten path.²

He is, on the other hand, so mindful of the technique of language that he compiles an English grammar, in order, says he, "to free our language from the opinion of rudeness and barbarism, wherewith it is mistaken to be diseased," and to "shew the copy of it and matchableness with other tongues." His feeling and solicitude are the same as Daniel's and Drayton's;³ foreigners are unaware of the merits of English literature; it is an honourable duty to facilitate for them the means of knowledge; a grammar will help them to know "all our labours, studies, profits, without an interpreter," while it will also "ripen the wits of our own children and youth."⁴ Contrary to Shakespeare, Jonson delights in the old national authors; he reads them, not to seek in their works plots for his

¹ Induction to "Cynthia's Revels."

² Prologues to "Volpone" and to "Cynthia's Revels."

³ Above, II. pp. 362 ff.

⁴ Preface to "The English Grammar made by Ben Jonson . . . out of his observation of the English language now spoken and in use," first printed 1640.

plays, but to get pleasure, information, models of style. The examples quoted by him in his syntax show him to be well acquainted with Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Sir Thomas More, Lord Berners, Cheke, Ascham, Jewell, etc., Chaucer being his chief favourite.¹ It would be easy to continue almost endlessly the enumeration of contrasts in the dispositions and sentiments of the two great poets, the more interesting to compare, that they wrote at the same period, for the same public, but following opposed courses.² A study of the one is indispensable in order to understand the other; they complement one another, and their standing side by side increases the interest of the vast scene in which the crowd of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights moved and gazed, loved, sang, and quarrelled.

Jonson takes as guides his knowledge, his experience, and his reason, all three of the highest order. Few of his contemporaries knew the ancients better than he; classics were constantly in his hands; his "well-furnisht librarie" was famous;³ he translated the "Poetical Art" and various poems of Horace; conscious or unconscious reminiscences swarm under his pen: "He was better versed," he said to Drummond, "and knew more in Greek and Latin than all the poets in England."

¹ Cf. his "Scriptorum Catalogus," containing especially the English writers in prose or verse whom he considered eloquent, "Timber," lxxii.

² For more details, see "Ben Jonson's views on Shakespeare's art," in vol. x. of the "Works of Shakespeare," ed. Bullen, Stratford-on-Avon.

³ "Having not at hand the scholiast (out of whom I hoped some aid), I went to see it in the well-furnisht Librarie of my beloved friend that singular Poet Mr. Ben Jonson, whose special worth in Literature, accurat judgment and performance, known only to that few which are truly able to know him, hath had from me, ever since I began to learn, an increasing admiration."—Selden, "Titles of Honor," Preface, 1614. On this, and on Jonson's library and the books from it which still exist, see R. W. Ramsey, "Books from the Library of Ben Jonson," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, January 23, 1907.

His experience and knowledge of life was considerable ; he had travelled, had visited Paris, Flanders, England, Scotland ; he had lived in taverns and in the houses of the great, guest of Esme Stuart, Lord of Aubigny, for five years ; he had always kept his eyes open ; no sight, no building in London, no house, no place of resort with which he was not familiar. Of an ill-bred man he says :

He minds
A curtesy no more than London bridge
What arch was mended last.¹

As friend or as foe he was in ceaseless contact with all the men of letters of the time ; he had dabbled somewhat in political and religious affairs at the time of the Gunpowder plot ; he was favourably regarded at court, being the preferred poet of the learned James I. He had, he says himself :

. . . Eaten with the beauties and the wits,
And braveries of court, and felt their fits
Of love and hate.²

Citizens and their wives, courtiers, soldiers, diplomats, puritans, travellers, ladies of fashion, poetasters, true devotees of the Muses, adventurers, were familiarly known to him ; he had seen them at work and at play, in their glory and in their shame, from Whitehall to Southwark.

His reason is lucid, imperious and autocratic ; we know that it dares pass judgment on the ancients themselves. This same reason tells him that there is a time when elegance, fancy, and bright hues should predominate, and free rein should be given to imagination ; and he writes his masques in graceful, lively style. Erudition reappears, however, when he prints them, and he adds mythological annotations as learned as if he had been

¹ "Staple of News," ii. 4.

² "Underwoods," lx.

elucidating a "Poetical Art" or a Roman tragedy: "The including of many cupids wants not defence, with the best and most received of the ancients, besides Prop. Stat. Claud. Sido. Apoll. especially Phil. in Icon. Amor. whom I have particularly followed in this description."¹ With any one else it would be surprising; with him, nothing more natural.

Jonson is worthy of memory, above all as an observer of his contemporaries, as an "empyrick," a "sponge." The troubles of the times, the wars, the venturous journeys to distant lands, the hostile religious sects, the new means of rising become accessible to all, in a period when the dividing lines between classes were no longer so stringent, had filled the court and the town with strange samples of mankind, and queer-brained people: semi-heroes, semi-maniacs, semi-scoundrels, as well as real heroes, real maniacs, and real scoundrels. This blossoming of abnormal types struck all observers; considerable room is reserved for them in essays, satires, and comedies. Traits of character, fancies, whims, and eccentricities, all these were summed up in a word which, for several years, was of constant recurrence in conversations, books and plays, one of those teasing catchwords, which come now and then into prominence, for a time, the word *humour*. Shakespeare makes fun of it² and Jonson uses it: all testify to its popularity. The first play by Jonson which has come down to us is called "Every Man in his Humour"; throughout his life Jonson would come back to these oddities, singularities, or traits of nature; they were his domain proper, the kind of subject which best suited his personal gifts, the staple article among his theatrical

¹ "The Masque of Beauty."

² "I like not the humour of lying. He hath wronged me in some humours; I should have borne the humorous letter to her."—Nym in "Merry Wives," ii. 1.

wares: "What do you lack, gentlemen, what is't you lack?" says he, addressing his audience in one of his last plays, "any fine fancies, figures, humours, characters, ideas, definition of lords and ladies? waiting-women, parasites, knights, captains, courtiers, lawyers? What do you lack?"¹ But though the word "humour" had then the broadest signification,² Jonson took it usually in its narrower sense. He but rarely attempted to draw complete characters on a larger scale (and when he did, wrote his masterpieces); ever and again he reverted to mere whims and oddities; he satirised them in his epigrams, his occasional poems, and even in his court masques. The hero of one of his principal and most famous comedies is simply affected with a semi-morbid whim: "Morose. A gent. that loves no noise."

On his stage, therefore, we see pass, numerous, variegated, misshapen from birth or rendered so by the stress of life, citizens and their wives anxious to push their way into court circles; husbands who are too fond of their wives, and others not enough, foolishly jealous or foolishly confiding; noisy braggarts and conceited sots, Bobadils or Tuccas who talk poetry as if they knew something about it, praise "Hieronimo," and brandish swords more formidable than "Morglay, Excalibur, Durindana, or so," proud of their fine leg—"How dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?"—peerless fencers who by a sad mischance are always stultified, derided, and soundly beaten; fine ladies of a *précieux* turn of mind, like Lady Saviolina who provisions herself with high-flown sentiments and fine speeches from Sidney's

¹ "The Magnetick Lady: Or Humors Reconcil'd," acted 1633, pr. 1640, Induction.

² . . . For your whore,
Bawd, squire, impostor, many persons more,
Whose manners, now call'd humours, feed the stage.

("The Alchemist," Prologue.)

“Arcadia,” or “rather in Greene’s works, whence she may steal with more security;”¹ gallants more or less polished by city life, noisy at the play, who sit on the stage, show off their new clothes, leave scarcely breathing-room for the actors, and smoke all the time. “An ’twere not for tobacco,” says one of them, alluding to the players and the audience, “I think the very stench of ’em would poison me; I should not dare to come in at their gates.”² Withal those same travellers, who by dint of visiting foreign lands have become “sublimated and refined,” such as Amorphus, who has “enriched his country with the true laws of the duello,” and, like Don Juan, has been “fortunate in the amours of three hundred forty and five ladies, all nobly, if not princely descended; whose names I have in catalogue.”³ So he says.

If the plot is, in most cases, clumsy or insignificant (and Jonson is too good a critic not to notice it at times, and he then tries to justify himself by the example of the ancients⁴), if more than one of his plays are plays *à tiroirs*, in which the characters come forth, just to be satirised, in arbitrary succession—

Now, for my soul, another minion⁵—

all contain memorable traits, excellent scenes, and

¹ “Every Man out of his Humour.” Greene had been dead only seven years.

² “Cynthia’s Revels,” Induction.

³ Ibid. i. 1.

⁴ Cicero, he observes, describes comedy as “*imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*,” but says nothing of a complicated plot.—“Every Man out of his Humour,” Induction. As for himself, his set purpose is to place :

Words, above action; matter, above words.

(Prologue to “Cynthia’s Revels.”)

⁵ “Every Man out of his Humour,” i. 1.

pictures of manners true enough to nature to excite the envy of the cleverest painter and the admiration of the best historian. Sometimes the name of La Bruyère comes to mind, and sometimes that of Molière himself; but the heaviness of the hand, the number of sorry antics, the sombre hues, the bitter irony, give Jonson a place apart, apart from Molière, at all events. In his powerful, darksome, often loathsome "Alchemist," which had for his contemporaries all the keen interest of a picture drawn from life, revealing actual dangers,¹ he sums up in the single portrait of Sir Epicure Mammon most of the successive sketches pencilled by La Bruyère

¹ "The Alchemist," acted 1610, first printed 1612; mod. separate ed. by C. M. Hathaway, "Yale Studies," New York, 1903, with an essay on the history of alchemy, or ed. Schelling, "Belles Lettres Series." "This comœdie," says a postscript in the 1616 folio, "was first acted in the yeere 1610 by the Kings Majesties servants. The principall comœdians were," those famous friends of Shakespeare, "Ric. Burbadge, Hen. Condell, Joh. Hemings," etc. Impostors of the Subtle type, so well described by Chaucer in early days (above, vol. I. p. 327), had rather multiplied than diminished in number at the Renaissance; the satire of their misdeeds is to be met with everywhere: in "L'Alchimista, comedia di M. Bernardino Lombardi, nuovamente ristampata" (Venice, 1602, dedication dated Ferrara, May 20, 1583); in Hall's works (portrait of Raymundus, whose "lands are spent in golden smoke" ("Satires," iv. 3)); in Ronsard's Hymns:

Après d'un alquemiste il alla voir fumer
 Les fourneaux qui font l'homme et son bien consommer . . .
 Il cognut le salpestre et tous les végétaux,
 Antimoine, arsenic, vitriol et métaux,
 Tînes, cuves, bassins et creusets et coupelle,
 Et l'argent prompt et vif qui de son nom s'appelle,
 Vases, coffres et pots bien vernis et plombés,
 Fiolles aux longs cols contre elles recourbez.

("Hymnes," book ii. 10, "De Mercure.")

The satire is resumed by Ch. Sorel in his amusing, though little known, "Polyandre, histoire comique": "En regardant vers la porte, près de laquelle il y avoit une cuvette de cuivre à l'ancienne mode, et tantost vers la cheminée garnie de ses ustenciles il s'écria: Ha! vaisseau de vile matière, tu seras un jour de fin or, et vous, chenets et landiers, vous aurez aussi l'honneur d'y parvenir!" Paris, 1648, vol. ii. p. 122; portrait of Héliodore, "le docte chymiste."

in his famous chapter "Des biens de fortune." My flatterers, says Sir Epicure,

Shall be the pure and gravest of divines
That I can get for money.¹

Before Molière, Jonson has a Tartuffe fattening at the board of an Orgon; he shows the Cathos and the Madelons of London strutting on the stage in pre-Arthénice days, and hastening to enjoy the attentions of their "servants" before old age comes: "And who will wait on us to coach then? or write, or tell us the news then? make anagrams of our names, and invite us to the Cock-pit, and kiss our hands all the play-time, and draw their weapons for our honors?"² He has an Oronte complacently reciting a ridiculous madrigal: "It is a madrigal of modesty:

Modest and fair, for fair and good are near
Neighbours, howe'er—

"*Dauphine.* Very good.

"*Clerimont.* Ay, is't not?

"*Daw.* No noble virtue was ever alone,
But two in one.

"*Dauphine.* Excellent!

"*Clerimont.* That again, I pray, Sir John. . . .

¹ II. 1.—A more pungent satire than La Bruyère's remark on the rich woman: "Il y a une brigue entre les prêtres pour la confesser, tous veulent l'absoudre et le curé l'emporte."

² "Epicene, or The silent Woman. A Comœdie. Acted in the yeere 1609. By the Children of her Majesties Revells," iv. 3, first printed 1616; mod. ed. by Aurelia Henry, "Yale Studies," New York, 1906. The play was revived with great success at the Restoration: "The best comedy I think that ever was wrote," says Mr. Pepys, who saw it on September 18, 1668, "and sitting by Shadwell the poet, he was big with admiration of it."

"*Daw.* No noble virtue was ever alone,
 But two in one.
 Then when I praise sweet modesty, I praise
 Bright beauty's rays :
 And having praised both beauty and modesty,
 I have praised thee.

"*Dauphine.* Admirable !

"*Clerimont.* How it chimes and cries tink at the close,
 divinely !" ¹

La chute en est jolie, amoureuse, admirable !

Philinte will exclaim.² But Jonson's picture is brightened by no ray of sunshine, and while, by his theme, he may recall Molière, by his colouring he recalls Hogarth's canvases now blackened by age.

Jonson's language is eloquent ; he excels in sharp, ironical repartees. Called "a rogue, a cheater," his usurer answers :

What you please, gentlemen . . .
 And as for titles, be they rogue or rascal,
 Or what your worships fancy, let them pass,
 As transitory things ; they are mine to-day,
 And yours to-morrow.³

Ampler speeches, giving, with stern vigour, moral lessons which will not be easily forgotten, also abound in his plays, old Knowell's apostrophe, for instance, on the result of the examples set before children in their infancy under the paternal roof :

. . . The first words
 We form their tongues with, are licentious jests :
 Can it call whore ? cry bastard ? O, then, kiss it !
 A witty child ! can't swear ? the father's darling !

¹ "Epiccene," ii. 2.

² "Le Misanthrope," i. 2.

³ "The Staple of News," ii. 1.

Give it two plums . . .
 —But this is in the infancy, the days
 Of the long coat ; when it puts on the breeches,
 It will put off all this.—Ay, it is like,
 When it is gone into the bone already !
 No, no ; this dye goes deeper than the coat,
 Or shirt, or skin ; it stains into the liver,
 And heart, in some.¹

As for the pictures of manners, they are innumerable, and not only in the great comedies like “*Volpone*,” “*Epicœne*,” or the “*Alchemist*,” but in lesser works, even the earlier ones, even those of the latter days and of the period of decay, even in his masques and entertainments : scenes among the strange medley of people who met around the pillars of old St. Paul’s ; scenes at the tavern or theatre, among players, critics, and poets, all described from life ; scenes among rustics’ sons who are anxious for lessons in deportment, who wish to be taken for gentlemen and fancy that manners can be learnt, like Latin, by dint of hard work and study ; scenes in the houses of townsmen, vain or modest, among gulls athirst for astounding news, and who begin to form a public for gazettes, then in their infancy. At the time when Jonson wrote, a rivalry still subsisted between the manuscript “letters of news” and the printed ones, between the Factor and the Printer. His horoscope on the future of the latter is decidedly unfavourable :

“*Printer*. Indeed, I am all for sale, gentlemen ; you say true, I am a printer, and a printer of news . . . I’ll give anything for a good copy now, be it true or false, so it be news.”

The Factor who sends his handwritten letters every week to a thousand subscribers, “of all ranks and of all religions,” deplores the debasement of his art through printing : “I would have no news printed, for when they

¹ “Every Man in his Humour,” ii. 3.

are printed they leave to be news."—Not at all, the other answers, "It is the printing of them that makes them news to a great many who will indeed believe nothing but what's in print." After some time, "as the age grows forgetful, I print [them] over again, with a new date and they are of excellent use."¹ Jonson delights in such descriptions of Londonian manners: "Our scene is London," he says, with evident satisfaction.²

¹ Jonson recurred twice to this subject, a favourite one with him, first in his "News from the New World discovered in the Moon, a Masque," presented at court, 1620, and from which the above quotations are taken; then in his "Staple of Newes," performed by "his Majesties Servants," 1625, pr. 1631, mod. ed. by De Winter, "Yale Studies," New York, 1905. The scenes at the Staple, or "House of Fame," are amusing but merely episodic, and have little connection with the rest of the play, a strange one in which Sheridan is anticipated, and the Moralities of old continued. Miss Pecunia complains of a miser to a prodigal:

. . . Once he would have smothered me in a chest,
And strangled me in leather, but that you
Came to my rescue, and gave me air (iv. 1).

As for the news office, we learn there that the King of Spain has been elected Pope, that torpedoes ("an invisible eel . . . to sink all the shipping") have just been invented, which if not news is at least prophecy, and that great things are in store for Americans:

. . . We hear of a colony of cooks
To be set ashore o' the coast of America,
For the conversion of the cannibals,
And making them good eating Christians (iii. 1).

A considerable portion of this comedy is borrowed from the ancients (Aristophanes and Lucian) or taken from English plays, in which Jonson himself had had a hand. See W. W. Greg, *Mod. Lang. Review*, vol. i. p. 327.

^ Our scene is London, 'cause we would make known,
No country's mirth is better than our own.
No clime breeds better matter.

"The Alchemist," Prologue. See also the picturesque description of the London streets with their bustle and noise, bear-wards crying their "games" and followed by their escort of dogs; fencers preceded by a drummer and "marching to their prize," etc., in "Epicœne," ii. 1.

In "*Cynthia's Revels*,"¹ Jonson takes us to court and leads us behind the scenes of that other stage; the play might be called the "*School for Courtiers*." Fashionable Hedon, "a gallant wholly consecrated to his pleasures," displays "his graces," is himself the favourite subject of his talk, and cannot keep secret "how many shirts he has sweat at tennis that week." He invents oaths fit to be used in the drawing-rooms of refined ladies: "I have devised one or two of the prettiest oaths this morning in my bed, as ever thou heard'st." He lays stress on his invention, and then reveals it; he will say to a lady: "By the white valley that lies between the Alpine hills of your bosom, I protest" — elegant oaths these, very different from those of impudent Anaides, who makes himself conspicuous in another fashion: "The oaths which he vomits at one supper would maintain a town of garrison in good swearing a twelvemonth." Ladies discuss "head-tires": "This is most excellent . . . 'tis after the Italian print we looked on t'other night."

Amorphus, the eloquent and loquacious traveller, whose mere presence is an advertisement for a tavern (so that "the wife of the ordinary gives him his diet to maintain her table in discourse"), has at heart the courtly education of Asotus, the wealthy citizen's son. The first experiment has proved a failure; in the presence chamber, Asotus has completely lost his head. His friend shows him what to do in such cases: "If you had but so far gathered your spirits to you, as to have taken up a rush when you were out, and wagged it thus, or cleansed your

¹ First ed.: "*The Fountaine of Selfe-Love, or Cynthias Revels*. As it hath beene sundry times privately acted in the Black-Friers by the Children of her Majesties Chappell," 1601, 4to, greatly enlarged in the 1616 fol.; performed 1600. Among the child performers were Nathaniel Field, afterwards famous, and Salathiel Pavy, who died young, and whose fate was mourned by Jonson in a touching and graceful epitaph (Epig. cxx).

teeth with it, or but turned aside, and feigned some business to whisper with your page, till you have recovered yourself, or but found some slight stain on your stocking, or any other pretty invention, so it had been sudden, you might have come off with a most clear and courtly grace." The pupil is not "audacious enough"; he must "frequent the ordinaries a month more to initiate himself." Then he will begin again his ascending journey: "After this you may to court, and there fall in, first with the waiting-woman, then with the lady." He will be allowed, maybe, to "hire coaches" for them, "or to read them asleep in afternoons upon some pretty pamphlet." Asotus works conscientiously and practises at home; the master, who does not mean to be defeated, renews his lessons. We must begin again; now let us: "With a trembling boldness and bold terror, you advance yourself forward. . . .

"*Asotus*. Well, sir, I'll enter again; her title shall be 'My dear Lindabrides.'

"*Amorphus*. Lindabrides!

"*Asotus*. Ay, sir, the Emperor Alicandroe's daughter, and Prince Meridian's sister, in the 'Knight of the Sun'; she should have been married to him, but that the Princess Claridiana . . .

"*Amorphus*. Oh, you betray your reading."

Lindabrides is, however, maintained; ¹ the experiment is

¹ She and the others appear in the then immensely popular, and now profoundly forgotten, "*Espejo de principes y caualleros en el qual se cuentan los immortales hechos del cauallero del Febo y de su hermano Rosicler*," Saragossa, 1562, fol., a copy at the Sapienza, Rome (Brunet); the work of Ortuñez de Calahorra; many editions and translations. An English translation was given by Margaret Tyler, R.P. and L.A.: "*The Mirrour of princely deedes and Knighthood*," London, 1579, ff.; several other ed. The "*donzel del Febo*," or Knight of the Sun, falls in love with Claridiana, a princess of Trebizond, then with Lindabrides, "*una donzella que por su grandeza y hermosura era tenida por divina*," sister of Prince Meridian and daughter of Alicandro, "*el qual es Emperador de Tartaria la mayor, de la gran Scita, y señor de todas las Indias Orientales y Meridionales* . . . Key

repeated; the simpering graces of court ladies are complacently set forth; wit matches, inspired by the "supper at Casale," and showing the progress of "Italianate" manners, are the occasion of amusing scenes.¹ Finally Crites, "a creature of a most perfect and divine temper," and in whom Jonson naïvely believed that he himself would be recognised, passes judgment on everyone, condemns "affected humours," reforms manners, and brings back to penitence those elegant courtiers and superfine ladies who had, like the author himself alas! drunk at the "Fountain of self-love."

Those innumerable portraits have almost all the same fault: their outline is too marked, the shadows on them are too dark. Jonson sneers rather than laughs; he is better at sarcasm than at jesting; he engraves his figures on his metal plate with steady but too heavy a hand; he uses too much acid; it happens to him to break his graver, or to cut holes in his plate. His implacable severity causes fatigue, provokes rebellion; even his friends thought he went too far: "You write with a porcupine's quill, dipped into too much gall. Excuse me that I am so free with you."² He is too hard on his sinners, some of whom are addicted to very venial sins; for the slightest

de los Reyes, Señor de los Señores" (book ii. chap. 21). Meres mentions the "Mirror" among the books which, no less than "Arthur," "Prima-leon," "Gargantua," etc., "are to be censured." But the work had none the less a considerable success; it was among those read by Drummond of Hawthornden in 1606; the name of Lindabrides became comically proverbial; John Locke, the philosopher, uses it playfully in his correspondence. See Bastide, "John Locke," Paris, 1907, p. 110. Cf. above, vol. II. pp. 496, 498.

¹ Above, vol. II. p. 291. In Jonson's comedy they play at "substantives and adjectives"; each member of the assembly chooses an epithet; the presiding lady then gives a noun, and everybody has to explain, on the spur of the moment, how appropriate the epithet he has chosen is to the noun (iv. 1).

² James Howell to Jonson, May 3, 1635.—"Epistolæ Ho-Eliañæ," 2nd ed. 1650, p. 208.

wart, out comes his hot iron, and he sears to the bone and even throws a handful of salt on the open wound. He chastises foibles as though they were crimes. To punish Morose for his excessive hatred of noise, he makes him marry a shrew (a man disguised as a woman), causes him to become half mad, and despoils him of his fortune to the benefit of his tormentors. It is not enough that his Alchemist be a swindler, Jonson makes of him a pander who retails the philosopher's stone and human flesh besides ;¹ the picture is truly painted "à la manière noire."

His attention being engrossed by the individual whose deformities he means to lay bare, Jonson neglects the ensemble. Those plots which he prided himself on inventing are, for the most part, very weak ; his people go forth one after the other, a macaberesque procession, fitter to excite melancholy than mirth, ceasing to move because the five acts are filled, having been brought together by the arbitrary will of the poet, who takes his models from real life, but groups them according to his good pleasure. To have some sort of a plot he has recourse to disguises, substitutions, errors, and recognitions. He inserts episodes which distract the attention ;² he, so conscious of his duties as an artist, yields to the temptations offered by chance occasions. A friend though he be of the classics, he has not in his mind the logical rigour of French dramatists, which rigour does not offer only disadvantages. He is occasionally absent-minded, hence obscurities ; he will sometimes forget to make his Crispinus ridiculous, and will allot to him

¹ Cf. Lombardi's before quoted "Alchimista" ; in the monologue by which he opens the play, Momo, the Alchemist, says : "E poi di maggiore importanza la promessa che mi ha fatto il mio Filosofo di farmi trovar tesori e di godere per arte di negromancia l'Angelica."

² In "Poetaster," the episode of Ovid's loves has nothing to do with the subject, and fills more than half the play ; in "Epicoene," amusing episode of the "ladies collegiate" ; in "Volpone," episode of Sir Politick-Would-Be, etc.

one of the prettiest answers in the play. "Now, in sincerity," exclaims the citizen's wife, Chloe, enamoured of courtly people and of wits, and in ecstasy at the mere prospect of seeing a poet, "they be the finest kind of men that I ever knew. Poets! would not one get the emperor to make my husband a poet, think you?"

"*Crispinus*. No, lady, 'tis love and beauty make poets: and since you like poets so well, your love and beauties shall make me a poet."¹

There are a few exceptions, however. Instead of more or less affected humours, we have characters; the succession of incidents, instead of being arbitrary, becomes logical; instead of a play *à tiroirs*, we have a real drama and a great comedy: of the sort, however, which sends one home with a saddened heart and no laughter on the lips. Such is Jonson's "*Volpone, or the Fox*," his masterpiece, dedicated to "the most noble and most equal sisters, the two famous universities" of Oxford and Cambridge.² There we find both action and characters, an action which is interesting and progresses as necessity commands, and characters of great external originality and perfect internal truth. *Volpone* is not the ordinary miser, so frequently met with in literature since the days of the ancients. No, a great contemner of men, he would be unable to fully enjoy wealth if he had not acquired it by ruse, through tricks justifying his contempt for mankind and increasing it at each new venture:

I glory
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
Than in the glad possession, since I gain
No common way; I use no trade, no venture;
I wound no earth with plough-shares, fat no beasts,

¹ "Poetaster," ii. 1.

² "Ben Jonson: his *Volpone Or the Foxe*," 1607, first performed 1605 or 1606. On Jonson's indebtedness to Lucian, see J. Q. Adams, in *Modern Philology*, October, 1904.

To feed the shambles ; have no mills for iron,
 Oil, corn or men, to grind them into powder ;
 I blow no subtle glass, expose no ships
 To threat'nings of the furrow-faced sea.

For him, one means to get rich suffices, and that is imposition. Surrounded with men's tenderness and homages, he quietly and smilingly appropriates, nay, kindly allows them to bestow on him, their worldly goods. His staple deceit is renewed every morning. Scarcely visible in his bed, his head covered with double and triple night-caps, speaking in scarcely audible tones, he plays the comedy of impending death : friends, enemies, judges, lawyers, are ensnared ; and if former generations may perhaps have thought such unanimity improbable, ours cannot, as it has seen reality parallel the dramatist's invention. All the men of prey through the town lay siege to the supposed moribund, nurse him, caress him, encourage him, and knowing his passion for gold, seeing him without children, bring him plate and jewels in the hope of being made his heir. There even come aged men, older than Volpone, and who, nearly deaf, and with one foot already in the grave, chuckle at the thought of the merry dance they will dance when he is laid low. "As if fate," says Volpone of one of them,

Would be as easily cheated on as he.

"Would to heaven," exclaims Voltore, one of the candidates for the inheritance,

I could as well give health to you as that plate !

Volpone accepts the plate, and both encourages and recompenses the giver by answering :

I feel me going ; uh ! uh ! uh ! uh !
 I'm sailing to my port ; uh ! uh ! uh ! uh !
 And I am glad I am so near my haven.

The noble figure of Celia, "the blazing star of Italy," a rare type in Jonson's theatre, makes the dark group of vultures, foxes, and ravens stand out even darker.¹

Cutting remarks, cruel traits abound; Mosca, an under-fox, Volpone's henchman, accused, at the end, of swindling, is summoned before the judges; he is believed to have inherited his master's fortune; but there are doubts: is the master really dead? The wary judges act with circumspection, for, after all, it is just possible the accused man may be now "a man of great estate." They despatch a notary with the mission to politely "entreat his presence here." Mosca is so good as to come.

4th Avvocato (magistrate). Here comes the gentleman, make him way.

3rd Avvocato. A stool.

4th Avvocato. A proper man; and were Volpone dead,
A fit match for my daughter . . .

It is a match, my daughter is bestowed.

A number of episodic scenes and picturesque sketches give variety to the drama: portrait of the mountebank praising his drug in a mirific speech, ever the same, so little has human folly changed, the very same that Rutebeuf's "herbalist" was already delivering in the thirteenth century, and which is still delivered on our public squares by his descendants in the twentieth. "I am not," said Rutebeuf's man, "one of those poor herbalists who stand in front of these churches with their miserable ill-sewn cloaks, who carry bags and boxes and spread out

¹ See her answers to Volpone, who tried to tempt her by a picture of the wealth he could place at her feet:

Good sir, these things might move a mind affected
With such delights; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th' enjoying,
And which, once lost, I have nought to lose beyond it,
Cannot be taken with these sensual baits:
If you have conscience . . . (iii. 5).

a carpet.”¹ “No, no, worthy gentlemen,” exclaims Jonson’s mountebank, “I cannot endure to see the rabble of these ground ciarlatani, that spread their cloak on the pavement as if they meant to do feats of activity.” He is a much better kind of man, for, what? his beauty powder is the same “that made Venus a goddess, . . . from her derived to Helen, and at the sack of Troy unfortunately lost,” but now recovered. His revalenta has healed the cardinals Montalto and Farnese; it is worth a thousand crowns, but he will give it you for eight, for six even, if you like, and he ends by selling it for sixpence.²

Then comes, for our delight, the pompous fool, who considers himself a statesman and a diplomat, who can discover all secrets, decipher all writings, knows the intentions of monarchs and the aspirations of their subjects, does not see a cabbage sold without suspecting a despatch concealed among its leaves, and who goes through life enchanted with his merit, delighted with his keenness, astounded at others’ credulity, himself the most credulous of all, for he believes only in the impossible and holds as certain only the wonderful. A boundless mind, for,

Sir, to a wise man, all the world’s his soil—

another portrait which should not be lightly pronounced an impossible caricature, and whose prototypes were so numerous that the name of Sir Politick Would-Be became popular at once and has remained proverbial.³

¹ “Belles gens . . . je ne suis pas de ces pauvres herbiers qui vont par devant ces moutiers, avec leurs pauvres chappes mal cousues, qui portent boites et sachets et étendent un tapis.”—“Le Diz de l’Erberie”; “Œuvres,” ed. Jubinal, 1839, i. 250 (modernised orthography).

² II. i. The mountebank turns out to be Volpone in disguise. Cf. in “The Play of the Sacrament” the rough sketch of Master Brundychy, the “leech,” and his man Cole, fifteenth century; above, I. p. 485.

³ George Wither prefaces his “Mistress of Philarete,” 1622, with a note from the “Stationer to the Reader,” declaring that the author has been asked to “explain his meaning in certain obscure passages,” but has answered that “he would purposely have something remaining doubtful, to

In "Bartholomew Fair,"¹ Jonson deals with another vice, by nature eternal, but which he depicts under its local and contemporary form, the comedy being thereby all the more truthful and lively. His hypocrite is not any sort of a hypocrite, but a particular one; he is the puritanical hypocrite, with habits and a vocabulary of his own, and a cumbersome zeal that makes him see in gingerbread wares "the merchandise of Babylon and the peeping of popery," and discover a sign of perdition in the cut of men's hair: "For long hair, it is an ensign of pride, a banner, and the world is full of those banners, very full of banners." If a line from Horace is quoted to him, he nearly has a fit: "Friend, I will leave to communicate my spirit with you, if I hear any more of those superstitious relics, those lists of Latin, the very rags of Rome and patches of popery." Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, for such is his name, lives in Littlewit's family, as Tartuffe does in Orgon's, eating heartily, drinking deep, and paying court to the mother-in-law, another hypocrite. Where is he? says the good lady. Will he not come?

"*Littlewit.* Presently, mother, as soon as he has cleansed his beard. I found him fast by the teeth in the cold turkey-pie in the cupboard, with a great white loaf on his left hand, and a glass of malmsey on his right.

"*Purecraft.* Slander not the brethren, wicked one."²

see what Sir Politick Would-Be and his companions would pick out of it." Saint-Evremond, who admired Jonson, but knew nothing of Shakespeare, made this personage the hero of one of his comedies. "Sir Politick Would-Be, comédie à la manière des Anglois," where we also meet again Lady Politick, "grave et sottement capable," and are introduced to "un voyageur allemand, exact et régulier, qui voit jusqu'aux dernières épitaphes des villes où il passe," and various other characters affected with "humours."

¹ "Bartholomew Fayre, a comedie, acted in the yeare 1614, by the Lady Elizabeth's servants," 1st printed in the second vol. of the first folio of Jonson's Works, 1631; ed. Alden, "Yale Studies," New York, 1904.

² *Orgon.* Et Tartuffe?

Dorine.

Il soupa, lui tout seul, devant elle,
Et fort dévotement il mangea deux perdrix,
Avec une moitié de gigot en hachis. ("Tartuffe," i. 5.)

Littlewit and his young wife have no puritanical tendencies ; it is the time of the great fair which, in former days, made all London merry ; they would like to go and see the booths, the hobby-horses and the puppet-play : " I have an affair in the fair, Win," says the young husband to his pretty wife, " a puppet-play of mine own making—say nothing—that I wrote for the motion man, which you must see, Win." And then there are those famous roast pigs, a dainty than which none better. That they may be allowed to go, the little wife, Win-the-Fight, to give her in full the name bestowed upon her by puritanical parents, will feign a pregnant woman's longing : " Win, long to eat of a pig, sweet Win, in the fair, do you see, in the heart of the fair, not at Pye-corner. Your mother will do anything, Win, to satisfy your longing, you know ; pray thee long presently ; and be sick o' the sudden, good Win."

But what will the family oracle say ? He has finished his pie ; he now comes, well refreshed and benignly disposed,

Gros et gras, le teint frais et la bouche vermeille,

just as Tartuffe himself will appear. He pours forth a flood of unctuous words, and on the asking of the mother-in-law, carefully discusses the case : " The place is not much, not very much ; we may be religious in the midst of the profane, so it be eaten with a reformed mouth, with sobriety and humbleness ; not gorged in with gluttony and greediness ; there's the fear : for should she go there, as taking pride in the place, or delight in the unclean dressing . . ." for modesty in dress is indispensable—" Cachez ce sein," Tartuffe will say—" to feed the vanity of the eye, or lust of the palate, it were not well, it were not fit, it were abominable and not good."

The problem is " subject to construction " ; they con-

strue accordingly that they should go, the intent being honourable, for no one would have poor Win "miscarry, or hazard her first-fruits"; all will be done in a penitent mind, so that they will not lose their chance of Paradise, and they will have their roast pig: "We'll seek the homeliest booth in the Fair, that's certain," says the husband; "rather than fail, we'll eat it on the ground."

But they must be on their guard: "Look not towards them," Busy keeps saying, "hearken not . . . the wares are the wares of the devils, and the whole fair is the shop of Satan." The event shows that it is he who is most familiar with the place, and can lead the family to the best booth, where the pig has the most pleasant flavour. "Let your frail wife be satisfied; your zealous mother, and my suffering self, will also be satisfied." When he has eaten to the utmost of his capacity, "drunk a pail full," and given plenty of good advice, he gets excited, is "moved in spirit," declaims against the fair, "and fitter may it be called a Foul than a Fair," he upsets "baskets of popery, nests of images, and whole legends of ginger-work," he is seized by the watch and placed in the stocks, and he glories in being "thus separated from the heathen of the land, and put apart in the stocks for the holy cause."

The young couple, freed of him, take things cheerfully, and in the most unregenerate and uncontrite frame of mind, attend the performance of Littlewit's puppet-play, the subject of which is Hero and Leander, and Damon and Pythias (a satire on plays with two plots), the scene being London, with a Leander of the city and a Hero of Bankside—of what kind such Heros were is well known—with the Thames between them in lieu of the Hellespont: much more interesting "for our audience; what do they know what Hellespont is?" Thus is the mass of pseudo-antique plays with their anachronisms and absurdities satirised by learned Jonson.

His own Roman plays of "Sejanus" and "Catiline"¹ are a powerful attempt to acclimatise, in granting a few concessions to the public, the drama of the ancients on the modern stage. "Catiline" has choruses and, at the end, the classical narrative, in florid style:

. . . The Furies stood on hills,
Circling the place, and trembling to see men
Do more than they.

But whole armies appear on the boards, and the unity of place is not observed. "A very excellent piece, . . ." Mr. Pepys wrote; "A play of much good sense and words to read," he wrote again four years later, but "the least diverting that ever I saw any. . . . The play is only to be read, and therefore home with no pleasure at all, but only in sitting next to Betty Hall."² "Sejanus," of much higher merit, has no choruses, and the unities are not observed either. Some sacrifices are indispensable nowadays, writes the author: "If it be objected that what I write is no true poem in the strict laws of time, I confess it: as also in the want of a proper chorus; whose habit and moods are such and so difficult, as not any whom I have seen, since the ancients, no, not they who have most presently affected laws, have yet come in the way of. Nor is it needful, or almost possible in these our times, and to such auditors as commonly things are presented, to observe the old state and splendour of dramatic poems,

¹ "Sejanus his fall," printed 1605; acted at the Globe, by Shakespeare's troupe, in 1603, when it met with less than indifferent success, as Jonson himself records: the poem "suffered no less violence from our people here than the subject of it did from the rage of the people of Rome," but it has since enjoyed "the love of good men" (to Esme, Lord of Aubigny).—"Catiline his Conspiracy," acted in 1611, printed in the same year, with indignant epistles showing that, again, success had not answered the poet's expectation.

² "Diary," December 18, 1664, after having read the play, and December 19, 1668, after having seen it performed.

with preservation of any popular delight." But he flatters himself on having "discharged the other offices of a tragic writer," the most important of all: "in truth of argument, dignity of persons, gravity and height of elocution, fulness and frequency of sentence."

The care for historical truth is carried as far as possible; each important word or fact is justified by a note: see Tacitus, see Suetonius; Jonson even states the edition he has followed. The real interest of these sombre dramas, however, lies not in what they convey to us of antiquity, but in what they offer that is particularly Jonsonian, in scenes belonging rather to cruel comedy than to tragedy, the author laughing in his own bitter, sardonic way: scene between those "great stateswomen," the Roman ladies in "Catiline," who mix in politics, know how to carry an election, and dress with so much art that people

Could make
Love to your dress, although your face were away;

scene between Sejanus and the physician Eudemus, who will become his accomplice; between Eudemus and Livia, between Sejanus and the flatterers; great scene in the senate when the Emperor's ambiguous letter is read; lastly, the account of Sejanus's death, with the sarcastic description of the crowd's contradictory fits of hatred and of tearfulness:

Nuntius. Their gall is gone, and now they gin to weep
The mischief they have done . . .
And some whose hands yet reek with his warm blood,
And gripe the part which they did tear from him,
Wish him collected and created new.

Kept in shackles when he wrote his serious dramas, Jonson's fancy is allowed free play in masques and entertainments. At court, on festal days, or on the occasion of a princely or ambassadorial visit (such as that of

"Monsieur le Baron de T^{ou}," French Ambassador, 1617),¹ assisted, until they quarrelled, by the famous architect, Inigo Jones, who had learnt abroad the secrets of Italian machinists,² Jonson evokes fairies and goddesses, speaks in musical tones, paints in freshest hues, is inexhaustible in graceful inventions. These masques were the operas of the period and resembled ours by their dances, their music, their songs, their scene-shiftings, and they had besides another means of pleasing, not to be sought for in modern operas: verses which were poetry. With Jonson and Inigo Jones the beauty of the poem and that of the scenic effects were on a par. A wondrous palace, before which lay sylvans dressed in leaves, opened, and "the nation of Faies were discovered," and the knights maskers, and Oberon in a chariot "drawn by two white bears." Night came and the moon rose; witches muttered their incantations among the rushes, on the borders of fens; the scene changed, and those among the audience who knew the literature of their country recognised in the marvellous temple suddenly appearing before them, old Chaucer's "House of Fame."³ Gods descended from Olympus,

¹ "Lovers made Men," usually called "The Masque of Lethe," presented in the house of Lord Hay, February 22, 1617.

² Born in London, 1573, d. 1652. He visited France and Italy, studying with passion the masters of the Renaissance and the antique statues and monuments. He filled his albums, some of which are still extant, with notes and sketches: draperies, attitudes, expressive faces, bones, hands, studies after Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, etc. His talent bears, however, the marks of the lateness of his visit: what he saw was the Italy of the decadence, that of the *giganti*, of men who thought they were doing better, because they were doing bigger. Inigo did not finish Whitehall, where he dreamt of adorning one of the courtyards with stone *giganti*. One of his albums, dated Rome, 1614, has been reproduced in facsimile by the care of the Duke of Devonshire (n.d.; 1832?). Cf. Mr. Blomfield's articles in the *Portfolio* 1889, and some of Jones's sketches and his intended *giganti* in my "English Novel," pp. 100, 101.

³ In the "Masque of Queens," February 2, 1609, "one of the typically splendid monuments or trophies of English literature," says Mr. Swinburne, "A Study of Ben Jonson," London, 1889, p. 49.

Cupid spread his wings and took flight, pigmies vanished into their holes ; and were it not for scenes of Rabelaisian comedy which no one considered out of place at court,¹ and for ponderous flatteries and enormous compliments to the king, princes, and "Bel-Anna," the queen (successor of Spenser's Bel-Phœbe), one would indeed think oneself transported out of space and time to the land of fairies.

Jonson's sweetest lines are in his last work, his unfinished "Sad Shepherd,"² an exquisite pastoral, the scene laid in England, in the days of Robin Hood, amid woods and meadows, bright with multi-coloured flowers like those in old tapestries. The gentle shepherdess Amie wonders at the pain she endures from a sentiment new-born in her heart, which it burns, and all the cool breezes of vales such as Poussin was to paint, can refresh her no more :

How often when the sun, heaven's brightest birth,
Hath with his burning fervour cleft the earth,
Under a spreading elm or oak, hard by
A cool clear fountain, could I sleeping lie,
Safe from the heat ! but now no shady tree,
No purling brook, can my refreshing be.

The sad shepherd laments the fate of beautiful Earine, drowned in the Trent ; spring has died with her ; earth since then has borne but thorns. . . .

Here she was wont to go, and here ! and here !
Just where those daisies, pinks, and violets grow :
The world may find the spring by following her . . .
Did not the whole earth sicken when she died ?
As if there since did fall one drop of dew,
But what was wept for her ! or any stalk
Did bear a flower, or any branch a bloom,
After her wreath was made . . .

¹ See, for example, "Pleasure reconciled to Virtue," 1619: "Beware of Dealing with the Belly," etc., speech of the bowl-bearer. The king enjoyed this masque so much that he had it performed again.

² "With Waldron's continuation" [1783], ed. Greg, Louvain, 1905.

The shepherd weeps, and will ever weep, for Jonson himself was carried to his last resting-place in the Poets' Corner before he could give back to Æglamour his love, or reveal to him that she was not dead but confined within a hollow tree by wicked Maudlin, that hated witch, who dwelt in "a gloomy dimble,"

Down in a pit, o'ergrown with brakes and briars,
Close by the ruins of a shaken abbey,
Torn with an earthquake down unto the ground,
'Mongst graves and grots, near an old charnel-house.

II.

An ever-ready public, ever-ready authors, talent in abundance: this had already been seen in the days of Shakespeare's predecessors; how can we describe what came later? A swarming such as was never observed before nor after; the number of dramatic authors is bewildering, the quantity of plays passes belief. Thomas Heywood boasts of two hundred and twenty plays in which he had had "either an entire hand or at the leaste a maine finger."¹ After having stopped before the two principal figures of the period, one great, the other colossal, we must content ourselves with noting the most characteristic traits of this teeming literature, those that show its worth, those especially which point out whither it was moving.

The more so as, while luminous spots—brilliant or tragical scenes, pathetic passages, personages of a striking individuality—abound, plays entirely satisfactory, strongly conceived, with the several parts firmly knit together, carried to an inevitable conclusion, are rarely to be found. For which cause, with all the celebrity surrounding their name, these authors are little read. They are still

¹ "The English Traveller," Preface, 1633.

reissued from time to time ; but usually the editor gives only selected plays, or else has but a small number of copies printed.¹ The readers whom these authors still secure are mostly critics who have themselves a book to write ; the purchasers are library owners who want to complete their collections. On rare occasions only do they meet with the ideal reader, who reads but to improve or enliven his mind, and who says to the author he loves : Soothe my sorrow, increase my joy, strengthen my reason, improve my knowledge of man. And the Italian dukes, libidinous and sanguinary, the patient Grissels, the loving women who die of their passion, the traitors, hypocrites, shepherds, and clowns, survive invisible between the covers of the "Complete Works," set in goodly array, once for all, on shelves which they never leave. Mist-bound multitudes, with subdued voices, victims of an inimical enchanter, surrounded by silence, they obtain only at rare intervals the boon of a transient evocation, peopling, as they do, dramas seldom purchased, less often read, never acted.

And those authors wrote only to be played. To be read was, in their eyes, a possible but quite secondary advantage ; they depended on the actor ; they composed in view of a public which has long since disappeared like themselves. "Comedies are writ to be spoken, not read," said Marston, "remember the life of these things consists in action."² No wonder that they please nowadays only in

¹ Selected plays of authors of this period (each play unexpurgated), in the "Mermaid Series," T. Fisher Unwin. Such editions as the "Marston" and the "Middleton" of Mr. Bullen consist, the first in "four hundred copies for the English market, and three hundred and fifty for America," the second in four hundred copies altogether. Only one hundred and fifty copies of Bullen's "Old Plays" were printed, 1882, 4 vols.

² "Parasitaster," Preface, 1606. Cf. "The Malcontent," by the same, Preface, 1604 : "One thing afflicts me, to think that scenes, invented merely to be spoken, should be enforcively published to be read." Even Jonson, comparatively so keen about the produce of his pen, told Drummond in 1619

parts, and are read only in extracts :¹ to maintain dramatic art at the height to which Shakespeare had raised it, it would have been necessary for the nation to produce several Shakespeares ; to have given one alone was glory enough ; "less well" was inevitable among contemporaries, decay among successors.

As the conflicting impressions left on the mind by this literature begin to settle, the most superficial of them gradually disappear ; the others remain, and permit us to understand how this theatre is connected with the past and how it prepares the future.

The two great men of the period belonged, as we have seen, to opposite schools. These two schools survive, though with very different fortunes ; one being the school of freedom, of the "Do what you please," of satisfactions granted without stint or measure to the general public ; namely, the school which the genius of Shakespeare had carried to the highest point of glory, and which was to fall

"that the half of his comedies were not in print." But for the Puritans, the plays of this period would have come down to us in much smaller quantities ; by their closing of the theatres they gave many authors and actors, henceforth idle, the idea of printing the texts in their possession. These texts found purchasers : to read plays, when it was no longer possible to see any played, was, after all, better than nothing. "And now, reader, in this tragicall age, where the theater hath been out-acted, congratulate thy owne happinesse that in this silence of the stage, thou hast a liberty to reade these inimitable plays." So wrote Shirley in his preface to Beaumont and Fletcher's Works, 1647.

¹ Those published in 1808 by Charles Lamb, one of the first among modern critics to draw attention to this literature, met with considerable success. But not only were they merely extracts, and very cleverly selected, but Lamb "expunged without ceremony all that which the writers had better never have written." These are his own words. The reader's pleasure is increased, but the opinion he is thus led to form of these authors is necessarily false ; the more so that, in his enthusiasm as an explorer, Lamb, whose eloquence is very persuasive, goes far in his praises : "Heywood is a sort of prose Shakespeare" ; one of the scenes in Ford's "Broken-heart," "almost bears us in imagination to Calvary and the Cross" ; Dekker "had poetry enough for any thing" ; Livia the procuress, in "Women beware Women," by Middleton, "is such a jolly wife as the wife of Bath," etc.

after him into prompt decay. The other school, that of conscientious observation, of "empiricks," of truth closely followed, whether it be a question of the present or the past, of comedy or of history, the school of Jonson, more accessible to talent, remains, on the contrary, prosperous. The gift of observation abounded in the nation which had had Chaucer and would one day have Fielding; a whole series of homely plays depicting middle-class life, and of tragedies in which historical and psychological truth was respected, was the honour of English dramatic literature under the first Stuarts. The members of this school, keeping close to solid earth, raised more lasting structures; the followers of the other, with their undisciplined pretensions and audacity, lost themselves alternately in mists or mud. They are the less to be pitied that their boldness was of the self-conscious kind; they were not impassioned writers carried away by their feelings, but calculating speculators.

Soon, among the latter, the signs of decay become visible. Deprived of genius, which alone might have saved them, they try, for lack of better, to distinguish themselves by carrying to the extreme their freedom of manners. It is a wild emulation; they swell, prop, and strengthen, as they believe, all the usual methods for impressing an audience; and, in reality, weaken them; what they call liberty is obscenity; terror with them becomes abominable horror, and the wealth of incidents an inextricable tangle. Decadence has set in.

Most of the plays of this period have a double or sometimes a triple plot.¹ These authors made it their rule to present what French ones made it theirs to discard.

¹ Examples of plays with triple plots: "May Day," by Chapman, "The Honest Whore," by Dekker, "A Cure for a Cuckold," by Webster; "A Woman is a Weathercock," by Field (1587-1633), the famous player, who had acted in dramas by Jonson, Chapman and Shakespeare.

The various stories are usually juxtaposed, not fused, and are allowed to stay crudely unconnected, the work oftentimes of different authors. In dramatic workshops, such or such a craftsman had for his part to provide farcical underplots, to be inserted anyhow into the main one, the subject of which he did not even need to know. It was enough to suppose, afterwards, that a character in plot A had a relation in plot B, and all was said and done. Rowley, for example, shone in that kind of work, and provisioned, to their hearts' content, authors of plots A with lewd jests, coarse or gruesome incidents for plots B.¹ Scenes thus succeeded one another, differing in tone and subject, and disposed as on a checker board, white squares and black squares. The public was delighted; it wanted to have, and, until well within the eighteenth century, did have, its plots and underplots.

No need to say that adventures, surprises, errors,² recognitions, sorcerers and magic,³ apparitions, death torments, scenes in madhouses or worse places are employed more than ever before. Thus, too, in order to amuse, recourse is had to buffoons, to foolish constables,⁴ to the use of foreign languages, provincial

¹ William Rowley, author and player, born ab. 1585, wrote mainly in collaboration. See, as an example of the kind of underplots he was renowned for, the madhouse scenes in Middleton's "*Changeling*." By him also, a prose description of low-life in London: "*A Search for Money, or the lamentable complaint for the losse of . . . Mounsier l'Argent*," 1609, Percy Soc. 1840; curious, but of much less merit than Dekker's and Middleton's similar works. W. Rowley must not be confounded with Ralph Rowley, also an actor, nor with Samuel Rowley, also a dramatist, all three of the same period.

² For instance, in "*What You Will*," by Marston, pr. 1607.

³ See, for example, "*The Devil's Charter*; a tragoedie containing the Life and Death of Pope Alexander the Sixt," by Barnabe Barnes (above, II. pp. 397, 403, 416), acted in 1606 before the king, printed in 1607, mod. ed. by McKerrow, in Bang's "*Materialen*," 1905. Like Dr. Faustus, the pope sells himself to the devil; a hideous picture of revolting vices fills the play.

⁴ Hence such comical scenes as the one in Middleton's "*A Mad World*,"

dialects and gibberish, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Cornish, Gipsy,¹ already in favour with Shakespeare. The search for incidents adaptable to the stage is extended to new countries; to France and Italy is now added Spain; from the early years of the seventeenth century, her novel-writers are constantly resorted to for plots and characters; and the illustrious *Lazarillo de Tormes* has the honour of appearing on the boards at the call of Middleton.² The wealth of events is, in these authors' eyes, of supreme importance. Even when their subject would seem to make a study of characters imperative, they give the first place to the intrigue. Although very close to the comedy of manners and, at times, of characters, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, even Middleton, and below them, Heywood, Dekker, and their peers, persist in depending on the curiosity excited by incidents to draw an audience to their plays.

Poetry becomes rarer. This supreme resource of Shakespeare, always at his disposal to veil a defect of

where Sir Bounteous, seeing a real constable come in to arrest his nephew, mistakes him for a player, and observes: "They put all their fools to the constable's part still" (v. 2).

¹ Italian in "*Antonio and Mellida*," by Marston; Dutch in the "*Dutch Courtezan*" of the same, and in the "*Shoemakers Holiday*" of Dekker; Gipsy in "*More Dissemblers besides Women*," by Middleton; Cornish in "*A Fair Quarrel*," also by Middleton; Dutch, Italian and French in "*English-men for my Money*," by Haughton (1598, pr. 1616), and in the use of these three languages consists all the fun of the play; German in "*Alphonsus Emperor of Germany*," attributed (wrongly, it seems) to Chapman; English mangled and mispronounced by a Welshman, described as a nephew of Rice ap Davy ap Morgan ap Evan ap Jones ap Geoffrey, in a "*Royal King*," by Thomas Heywood. This easy means of amusing the crowd had been early practised by the authors of miracle plays (above, I. p. 480) and of moralities. In the newly recovered "*Enterlude of Welth and Helth*," entered 1557, most of the fun comes from drunken Hance, entering "with a Dutch song" and speaking Anglo-Dutch throughout the play.

² In "*Blurt, Master Constable*," printed 1602. The "*Lazarillo*" had been translated into English with great success by D. Rowland. 1576, 6th ed. 1653; above, vol. II. p. 539.

composition, is but seldom accessible to his contemporaries and successors. With the master, even at his least happy moments, poetry is felt to be very near; the river at times flows under ground, but not far from the surface; it can be heard. With his successors, the enchanting rumour has been hushed, we are no longer under the continuous spell of the divine murmur. Here and there only, poetical patches are more or less cleverly set in, producing, they too, a chequered assemblage of black and white squares, in strong contrast, black ones predominating.

Terror is transformed into horror, freedom into obscenity; this sign of decay is most apparent. Under the two first Stuarts, a group of dramatists was formed—Marston, Ford, Webster, Tourneur—who made horror their speciality, while others, Dekker, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, used as their main condiment scenes of shameless ribaldry; neither group, moreover, refraining from using at need the other's recipe.

Marston gives, about 1600, "The History of Antonio and Mellida," and "Antonio's Revenge," written in that bombastic style ridiculed by Jonson in his "Poetaster": sombre pictures in which dark personages stand dimly discernible on a yet darker background.¹ Antonio, disguised as an Amazon, while Mellida is disguised as a page, ends by disguising himself as a corpse (a frequent device); seeing the body, Piero, Duke of Venice, and the monster of the play, declares that if the dead

¹ "The History of Antonio and Mellida. The first part. As it hath been sundry times acted by the children of Paules," 1602, 4to; "Antonio's Revenge. The second part," same date. John Marston, born ab. 1575, an Oxford student, B.A. 1594, composed plays from 1600 to 1607, then ceased to write for the stage and became a priest; d. 1634; "Works," ed. Bullen, 1887, 3 vols. 8vo. On Marston, lyrical and satirical poet, see above, vol. II. pp. 411 and 431. On his sources, see Koepfel, "Quellen-Studien," Leipzig, 1895. On Montaigne's influence on him (and on Webster) see Ch. Crawford's articles in *Notes and Queries*, July 15, 1905, ff.

man were alive, he would give him his daughter. Antonio rises and takes him at his word. All this is but a kind of introduction. In the second part, Marston surpasses himself; the stage looks like a butcher's stall with human flesh retailed to customers. Piero and Antonio answer one another, crime for crime, in a prolonged duo; we have gone back to the days of Titus Andronicus and Barabas, we are retracing our steps and going down hill, decadence is truly beginning. Piero opens the second play, "unbraced, his arms bare, smeared in blood, a poniard in one hand bloody and a torch in the other; Strotzo following him with a cord." Thus, accoutred and accompanied, at that darkest hour of night when no one moves,

Save meagre ghosts, Piero, and black thoughts,

he proceeds to hang up at his daughter's window the body of a man just butchered ("stab'd thick with blood"). In the next act the body is still there, and swings bleeding before the spectators. "Rot there," says Piero, who reveals to us what murders are coming next, and remarks:

I have been nursed in blood, and still have suck'd
The steam of reeking gore.

Antonio appears, "his arms bloody, bearing a torch and a poniard," just as Piero had, for now it is his turn. He has murdered in a church Julio, the son of his enemy, and he besprinkles with "these fresh reeking drops" the tomb of his own father, killed by the duke:

Look how I smoke in blood, reeking the steam
Of foaming vengeance . . .
. . . This is Julio's blood
Rich music, father; this is Julio's blood!
Why lives that mother?

Antonio has read "Hamlet," the old play that Shakespeare was to transform, and he knows that, in a good drama of the sombre kind, the victim's widow marries the murderer. Every device, in this category of play, was employed time and time again; if it was of an extraordinary sort, it pleased best, but was used most and soon became that horrible thing, a stale wonder.¹ Antonio is not mistaken: Maria really intends to marry her husband's murderer. The dead man's ghost, however, also knows the story of Hamlet, and as the unfortunate woman is drawing the curtain of her bed, she sees the ghost, sitting on the sheets. The apparition curses, then pardons her: "I pardon thee, poor soul." All hatred and revenge should be reserved for "that black incarnate fiend"—Claudius in "Hamlet,"—Piero here. Antonio, no less well read, feigns folly to discover the secret of the tyrant.

Marston's "Sophonisba" and his "Insatiate Countesse"² belong to the same category: lust and murders! The revolting indecency of the last acts of "Sophonisba" passes all imagination. As for the countess of the second play, she has a husband and five principal paramours:

Three earls, one viscount, and this valiant Spaniard,
Are known to ha' been the fuel to her lust;
Besides her secret lovers.

¹ Widows marrying the murderer of their husband, in Shakespeare's "Richard III." and "Hamlet"; in the first "Hamlet," in Marston's "Antonio and Mellida"; murderer trying to marry his victim's mother, in Chettle's "Hoffman," acted in 1602, one of the blackest of these dramas: at the opening of the play a cave is shown, before which swings the skeleton of a man who was hanged there; the play continues "qualis ab incepto"; tortures, murders, and revenges; at the end we find ourselves once more before the same cave, but with three corpses dangling instead of one.

² "The Wonder of Women, Or the Tragedie of Sophonisba, as it hath beene sundry times Acted at the Blacke Friers," first printed 1606; "The Insatiate Countesse. A Tragedie: Acted at White-Fryers," pr. 1613.

The scaffold, a frequent sight, is erected for her on the stage; she wants to speak: "Off with her head!" cries Medina; "off with her head," will a laughing echo repeat, in the subterranean world where Alice is to meet the wicked queen of "Wonderland."

By his fondness for poetical images, often out of place, and for ornamentation, often in very bad taste, Marston belongs to his time, writing as average poets did in his day. He cannot name morning or evening without speaking of the "bright silver curtains" drawn by "infant morn," and of the "imprison'd spirits" who "revisit earth" at nightfall while, he assures us, "lions' half-clamped entrails roar for food." Tears and sighs inspire him with effusions almost always ridiculous. Standing beneath an air-hole in her prison, Mellida exclaims:

O here, here is a vent to pass my sighs.
I have surcharged the dungeon with my plaints.
Prison and heart will burst, if void of vent.

Lust and murders: these words sum up also the whole series of the tragical dramas of Webster, Ford, and Tourneur, but, cleverer artists and playwrights of more power, they know far better how to seize the spectator, how to bind him and prevent his going away with a sneer. For there is no half way; if the writer of such plays does not succeed in tying his spectator hand and foot to the rack, instead of exciting his anguish, he will excite his laughter. Webster barely avoids this in his "Vittoria Corombona," but his "Duchess of Malfy" is perhaps the best drama of its kind.¹ His personages are not

¹ "The White Divil, Or, The Tragedy of . . . Vittoria Corombona, the famous Venetian Curtizan," London, 1612, 4to, acted ab. 1607, or a little later (debauch, murders, and poisonings; the duke kills his wife by coating with poison the lips of a portrait of himself which she kissed every evening).—"The Tragedy of the Dutchesse Of Malfy. As it was Presented privately, at

puppets ; real blood runs through their veins, and their hearts are seared by real passions. They can say, as the duchess to her steward, honest Antonio, with whom she has fallen in love, to the man's great dismay :

Sir, be confident :

What is't distracts you? This is flesh and blood, sir ;

'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster

Kneels at my husband's tomb.

As violent in their hatred as she is impetuous in her love, her brothers, who were looking forward to the inheritance of a childless widow, prepare at once the infernal torment that will rid them of her and be their vengeance. The unfortunate woman, surrounded by madmen who dance and howl,¹ will see herself dying by degrees, will hear the prayers for the dead said before the coffin prepared for her, beside a wax image figuring the corpse of the man she adored. The innocent and the guilty all perish at the end in a wholesale massacre.

Very far from the lyricism and the exquisite tenderness of a Shakespeare, Webster is, however, an artist ; controlling better a far less irrepressible genius, he knows how to place at the most appropriate spot his flowers of poetry. These are sometimes very beautiful ; the part of the pensive Antonio is strewn with them. Discarded,

the Black-Friers, and publicly at the Globe," acted ab. 1611 (Sampson), pr. 1623 ; the plot is derived from Paynter, who had it from Belleforest ("Histoires tragiques"—"L'infortuné mariage du Seigneur Antonio Bologne avec la Duchesse de Malfi, et la mort piteuse de tous les deux," story xix), who had it from Bandello. John Webster, born in 1580, was apprenticed to a tailor, then busied himself with the stage, and first belonged to the band of hack-writers in Henslowe's pay ; but he wrote his best works alone ; the date of his death is unknown (1625?). "Dramatic Works," ed. Hazlitt, 1857, 4 vols. 8vo. ; "The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfy," ed. M. W. Sampson, "Belles Lettres Series," 1904.

¹ "Here, by a Mad-man, this song is sung to a dismale kind of musique : O, let us howle . . ."—"Here the daunce consisting of 8 Mad-men, with musicke answerable thereunto" (iv. 2).

as he believes, by the duchess, he meditates on the uncertain fate of those who serve :

'Tis even like him, that in a winter night,
Takes a long slumber o'er a dying fire,
A-loath to part from't ; yet parts thence as cold,
As when he first sat down.

Antonio walks, musing, in the ruins of a cloister, and with a melancholy worthy of the romantics of a later date murmurs :

I do love these ancient ruins.
We never tread upon them, but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history :
And questionless, here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interr'd
Lov'd the church so well, and gave so largely to't,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doom's-day ; but all things have their end :
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.

Lust and murders. With a vigor in his style and a wealth of lugubrious inventions superior to any of his rivals, Cyril Tournear ¹ offers us, more than any one else, dramas truly filled

D'os et de chair meurtris et trainés dans la fange.

The mud is nauseous and the shreds of flesh hideous to behold : a chaos of blood and filth, monstrous crimes and atrocious revenges ; lovers asleep in a churchyard, each with a skull as a pillow, a rape in the same place, under the eyes of the spectators, the criminal discovering

¹ "Plays and Poems," ed. J. C. Collins, 1878, 2 vols. 8vo. "The Revengers Tragœdie" was printed in 1607 ; "The Atheist's Tragedie," though probably written first, was published in 1611. These two plays are in the "Mermaid Series," ed. J. A. Symonds.

at the last moment that he had to do with a corpse, and a man's corpse, himself being a priest, "a puritan!" . . .

"The Revenger's Tragedy" is another maelstrom of unbridled passions; they figure in the play under their own proper name: *Lussurioso*, *Ambitioso*, *Vindice*, *Castiza*; the place, as abstract as the personages, being a nameless "city in Italy," a land of poisons and debauch according to the poetics of the day. The town is governed by a libidinous duke and an incestuous duchess, seconded by children worthy of such parents. The duchess seduces a bastard son of her husband's; the husband ravishes or kills all the pretty women in his states; an unusual type of man in real life, a very common one in the theatre of the period. *Vindice*, the Revenger, another variant of Hamlet, opens the play addressing the skull of his betrothed, who would remain chaste and whom the duke has poisoned. He has this relic always about him, and draws it at times from his pocket. Disguised so as to be taken for a procurer and thus prepare his revenge, he sends the duke to a secluded pavilion where he will meet the handsomest woman in the world. The woman turns out to be a dummy, its face covered with a mask; under the mask the skull of the betrothed, whose mouth has been smeared with poison; at his first kiss the duke falls dying. He has time, before closing his eyes, to witness in the same pavilion the incestuous meeting of his wife and his bastard. Two acts are left the author in which to kill the few survivors, to show comets and storms, introduce a masque, exhibit freshly cut heads, show forth the chastity of *Castiza*, the ambition of *Ambitioso*, and the lust of *Lussurioso*. He comes back also to the loves of the duchess, kills right and left, in other words, is at his wit's end.

His great merit is his style, of extraordinary energy and picturesqueness. What he sees he makes us see:

. . . When he was afoot,
He made a goodly show under a pent-house,
And when he rid, his hat would check the signs
And clatter barbers' basons.

His words are full of strange life, his language is rich in images; he can open to view, in a few lines, those distant vistas that only a true poet is able to discover. Even after Hamlet's monologues, those of Vindice can be read¹: his gruesome ironies, the temptations by which he tests the heart of his own mother, his apostrophes to Night the abettor of great crimes, are worthy of a true dramatist, unfortunately gone astray in the circles of an unheard-of "Inferno."

Lust and murders. Such is again the subject of the "Broken Heart," "Love's Sacrifice," "'Tis Pity she's a Whore," by Ford, who has also, as principal literary merit, his style, an easier one and less fever-burnt than Tourneur's.² But as for the means of "pleasing," they are no less unpleasant; we are kept knee-deep in mud. "The gravity of the subject may easily excuse the lightness of the title," says Ford in the dedication of "'Tis Pity": the subject is an incest; this crime is the centre, the

¹ Addressing his betrothed's skull, he says:

Does the silkworm expend her yellow labours
For thee? For thee does she undo herself?
Are lordships sold to maintain ladyships,
For the poor benefit of a bewildering minute?
Why does yon fellow falsify highways,
And put his life between the judge's lips,
To refine such a thing?

. . . See, ladies, with false forms
You deceive men, but cannot deceive worms. (iii. 4.)

Cf. "The Atheist's Tragedy," iv. 3.

² All three printed 1633, apparently acted between 1626 and 1630. "Works," ed. Gifford and Dyce, reprinted, with additions, by Bullen, 1895, 3 vols.; selected plays in the "Mermaid Series." John Ford, of a good family of Devonshire, was born in 1586, belonged to the Middle Temple, d. later than 1639.

knot, the whole of the play. Annabella and her brother, feeling one for the other an insurmountable passion, confess it in the most poetical language, having but scorn for men's arbitrary laws and for prohibitions which are only vain customs, empty words.¹ Though pregnant, Annabella marries Soranzo, who, discovering her condition, pours on her a flood of insults, even more deserved than he suspects, for he thinks her guilty only of adultery. He throws her to the ground and drags her about the stage by the hair. Annabella laughs, a maniacal laugh, she sings, extols her guilt, dies voluntarily, by the hand of her lover, who appears at the last act with her heart "upon his dagger." All the personages in the play are poisoned, tortured, have their eyes plucked out, are hacked to pieces; the boards are soaked with blood; spectators fond of sanguinary sights had wherewith to be pleased, and could not regret having gone to the Phoenix that evening instead of to one of the Bankside circuses.

Even with those who have not made the sombre *genre* their speciality, lugubrious dramas abound. Massinger declares that the "most perfect birth of his Minerva" is his "Roman Actor."² The "gravity and height of the subject" could not, he says, but displease a public

¹ Shall a peevish sound,
A customary form, from man to man,
Of brother and sister, be a bar
'Twixt my perpetual happiness and me? (i. 1.)

² Performed 1626. No satisfactory edition: "Works," ed. Gifford, 1805-13, 4 vols., re-edited by Cunningham, 1867; select plays in the "Mermaid Series." Philip Massinger, born in 1583, studied at Oxford, wrote for the stage from 1606, first in collaboration with Field, Daborne, and especially Fletcher. He worked principally for the King's men, or servants, Shakespeare's troupe. Being only an author, he lived in poverty; he died suddenly in 1640. The mention "a stranger," in the Southwark registers on the occasion of his burial, has been a traditional cause of melancholy remarks, but it means only that he did not belong to the parish.

"only affected with jigs and ribaldry." Such is the influence of ambient ideas: Massinger was sincere, doubtless, but the grave and high subject treated by him consists in a picture of the ferocity and lubricity of an emperor whom he calls Domitian, but who might have been equally well the usual Duke of Mantua, Padua, or anywhere. If the ribaldry-loving public was not pleased with this, it was really hard to please. The emperor's mistress, as dissolute as himself, tries to force her love upon an unwilling actor, as the Duchess of Malfy had upon Antonio; the scene is nothing short of revolting. Two senators are tortured on the stage and done to death behind the scenes. Shakespeare's favourite devices are resorted to again without scruple. Massinger, who was writing for the "King's Majesties Servants," the former troupe of the great poet, was well acquainted with the contents of the chests for manuscripts at the Globe, and often shows it. He wants, however, to improve on his model, and he succeeds, as he thinks, by that easy method, accessible to all, multiplication. In writing the "Roman Actor" he remembered "Hamlet," but instead of one play within the play he has three, which is much.

In the "Duke of Milan," by the same, we find again the scene between the servants used as a preparation for the scene between their masters; murders, disguises, and poisonings; an over-credulous Othello matching an over-clumsy Iago.¹ Such reminiscences are frequent at this period: a new Friar Lawrence, a new Romeo, another Juliet, with a soporific causing apparent death, are in Dekker, one more Friar Lawrence is in Ford;²

¹ Marcelia, no less credulous, cannot help acknowledging, towards the end, that she has been preternaturally obtuse: "Oh! I have fooled myself—Into my grave." "Fooled" is certainly not too strong a word. "The Duke of Millaine, a tragedie," performed ab. 1620, pr. 1623.

² "The Honest Whore," by Dekker, pr. 1604; "Tis Pitty Shees a Whore,"

another Malvolio in Glapthorne; the duke of "Measure for Measure" reappears in Marmion; silly constables are countless.

Many of these authors hesitate between the two schools; they think themselves very bold if they try to outdo their predecessors; they believe that a treble plot will draw more spectators than a double one, and that three plays within their play will have more effect than only one. Instead of one madman or two, or even three or four, a number Shakespeare does not go beyond, and which may be held sufficient, they let loose on the boards troops of them, the whole contents of asylums: dances of madmen in Webster, scenes in an asylum in Middleton, in Dekker, in Fletcher.¹ They do not suspect that they would have shown much more boldness and originality, and would have won for themselves a more enduring fame if they had dared look less far, observe their neighbour, and speak of what they knew. For, generally, they might have done so if they had chosen to; they lacked neither talent nor the gift of observation; the use they make of their qualities spoils all; they are constantly on the verge of the comedy of manners or of characters, but they allow excellent scenes, worthy of the best adepts of the school of observation, to lie concealed among an extravagant succession of wonders and catastrophes.

In Massinger's "City Madam," "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," "The Bashful Lover," cumbersome incidents divert the attention from excellent studies of character, and remarkable gifts are sadly misused.² There remain,

by Ford. Another (greatlyedulcorated) Iago is in a "A Cure for a Cuckold," by Webster and Rowley.

¹ In Webster's "Dutchesse of Malfy," Middleton and Rowley's "Change-ling," Dekker's "Honest Whore," Fletcher's "Pilgrim."

² "The City-Madam," acted in 1632, perhaps earlier (character of Luke, of a ferocity and credulity equally unnatural; the usual parts of Bawd, Courtesan, etc. As samples of surprises, see towards the end the scenes

however, lively dialogues, sketches from life, and as, with all his ribaldry, which he thought indispensable to success, Massinger could attain elegant and refined comedy, he has some scenes of *marivaudage* worthy of Marivaux himself. Long before the French dramatist, he brought out, in his "Great Duke of Florence," the "Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard,"¹ but by an unfortunate lack of boldness, he deemed needful to mix with these pretty things a mass of commonplace adventures, wars between Florence and Mantua, with a battle on the stage, incidents in the depths of a forest where the heroine is on the verge of suffering violence from (horrible to say) a wicked ambassador.² He fears his public, and feels safe only in the land of romance; in the streets of London he is afraid. After having drawn the remarkable portrait of a Sir Giles Overreach, no more than Volpone the usual miser, but the man athirst at once for money, land, and worldly rank, who gives as a servant to his daughter a lady reduced to poverty, adding, "Trample on her," Massinger resumes with alacrity his romantic ways, and offers us disguises, rapes, murders, surprises, or, at least, sketches painted in such crude colours that it is no longer a proud or wicked

with the sham Indians, the supposed apparitions, the pretended portraits with the originals walking down from the frames, etc.)—"A New Way to Pay Old Debts," acted about 1625, pr. 1633; remarkable character of Sir Giles Overreach, proving, however, very unwary when he sends his daughter at night, in the company of Allworth whom she loves, to a lord whom he wants her to marry; he had provided her with a note directed to the parson and thus worded: "Marry her to this gentleman." On sight of this sort of cheque to bearer, the parson, who knows no better, marries her to Allworth.—"The Bashful Lover," acted in 1636; pretty scenes between the lover and the lady, amused at his timidity.

¹ Performed in 1627; in act iv. Petronella playing the part of her mistress, Lidia. See also, in act ii., the pretty scene between Fiorinda and Giovanni, destined by the duke to marry each other, but who both love elsewhere, and who, without confessing as much, greatly embarrassed, but very well bred, exchange polite phrases through which both end by suspecting the other's secret.

² "Bashful Lover," iii. 3.

woman who paces the boards, but Pride or Iniquity.¹ One more clever man who retrogrades, and who, with all his talent, brings us back to the moralities of old.

Dekker, who knew the capital so well, and whose prose essays contain so many scenes perfectly true to nature, whose speech is unshackled and who has the poetical gift, manages to write a comedy on London manners which would be less improbable if transferred to the more appropriate land of fairies, and the time when kings married shepherdesses.² Day once expressly assigns to himself the task of delineating characters, but he cannot help giving more room to fancy than to observation in the succession of little scenes forming his "Parliament of Bees."³ Thomas Heywood⁴ chooses excellent subjects for

¹ See, in the "City Madam," the scene where Anne and Mary notify to their betrothed their views on the conjugal state, ii. 2. It is almost as if they said: Do not marry us, we are monsters of pride and iniquity; and it is, in fact, thus that Pride and Iniquity would have spoken in former days.

² "The Shomakers Holiday," acted in 1599, pr. 1600; with its gaiety and surprising adventures, it could easily be turned into a Christmas pantomime; the more so that "nothing is purposed but mirth; mirth lengtheneth long life," says the author in his dedication. His "Old Fortunatus," pr. 1600, is a real fairy tale put on the stage (a tragedy by Hans Sachs on the same subject). The devil is one of the personages of his "If It Be Not Good"; "Dramatic Works," ed. Shepherd, 1873, 4 vols. 8vo. The name of Thomas Dekker, born about 1570, begins to appear in 1598, in Henslowe's Diary; he wrote enormously, at great speed, remained very poor, was more than once imprisoned, collaborated with fifteen or twenty of his contemporaries, and died in 1641. One of the prettiest plays to which he contributed is "Patient Grissill," written in conjunction with Haughton and Chettle, 1603, reprinted by the Shakespeare Society. On his prose works, see above, vol. II. p. 548.

³ Written 1607 (?), perhaps never acted, printed 1641. "Works now first collected," ed. Bullen, London, 1881, 4to. John Day, born in 1574, figures in Henslowe's Diary from 1598; a quick wit and facile pen, he wrote much in collaboration. The "Pilgrimage to [and Return from] Parnassus" has been attributed to him. Lively dialogues in his "Humour out of breath," printed 1608 (example, ii. 2, Lucia and Hermia), a play with Italian dukes, one having expelled the other; one has two daughters and a boy, the other two boys and a daughter; one can imagine how it all ends—less tragically than in "Romeo."

⁴ "Dramatic Works, now first collected," London, Pearson, 1874, 6 vols.,

psychological comedy and common life dramas ; but, among all his buffooneries, ribald dialogues, sudden and improbable incidents,¹ one can barely discern the fine scene which contained the germ of a masterpiece : vow of two lovers that they will remain virtuous without ceasing to see each other, and that they will be content with the equivocal and ever dangerous love as "twixt brother and a sister" ;² despair of a sinful wife who dies of emotion on being pardoned.³ Heywood's historical dramas connect him very closely with the school of romantic writers, careless of rules, and for whom all means are

8vo. Thomas Heywood, actor and dramatist, wrote for Henslowe from 1596. Besides his plays, he left prose treatises, translations, compilations, and various poems, of which the principal are conspicuous by their pretension and their platitude : "Great Britain's Troy," 1609, and "The Hierarchie of the blessed Angels, their names, orders and offices ; the fall of Lucifer," etc., 1635 ; Milton had then written already his first poems.

¹ For example, in one of his best-known plays, the sudden admission into his house by Frankford of young Wendoll, to make use of his fortune, his servants, and all that he has : "Welcome to me for ever."—"A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse," ii. 1, pr. 1607.

² However let us love still, I intreat :
That, neighbour-hood and breeding will allow ;
So much the lawes divine and humaine both,
Twixt brother and a sister will approve ;
Heaven forbid, that they should limit us
Wish well to one another.

("The English Traveller" ; "Works," vol. iv. p. 31.)

³ "A Woman kilde with Kindnesse," acted 1603, pr. 1607. By him also, among many other plays (including a series of incredibly indecent ones on the four "Ages," from Saturnus to the taking of Troy ; above, II. p. 412), romantic comedies, containing a mixture of impossible adventures and ultra-realistic scenes : "The Royall King and The Loyall Subject," 1637, acted about 1600, with superhuman feelings and naturalistic scenes at the ordinary, in a house of ill-fame, etc. ; "The Fair Maid of the West. Or a Girle worth gold," 1631, performed about 1620, showing the victories on land and sea of pretty Bess Bridges, a kitchenmaid, who maintains English prestige in all countries, defeats the Spaniards, and dazzles by her merits the Sultan of Morocco and the Dukes of Florence, Ferrara, and elsewhere ; a chorus keeps the public informed of the changes of locality :

Imagine Bess and Spencer under sail (etc.).

good, provided they be means of pleasing. He selects these so successfully that his worst tragedies proved his most profitable ones. When an author puts on the stage Queen Elizabeth,

Mirror of virtue and bright Nature's pride,

Sir Thomas Gresham, the London prentices, a Russian ambassador who speaks through an interpreter (in point of fact he speaks Latin), Drake and Frobisher holding the flags wrested from the Spaniards' Armada—"England's God be praised"—no matter whether the play be good or bad, it is sure to succeed. Heywood's play was bad; it had a wondrous success; it was revived, and had five editions, all read with delight, though the text of the first part, stolen by a clumsy stenographer during the performance, was execrable even for the times.¹

Heywood derives from national chroniclers and from ballad-makers the elements of his "Edward IV."² Once more the citizens of London hear their glory sounded; the sins and misfortunes of Jane Shore, the subject of innumerable "complaints," are told again, not without emotion, as well as the death of the little princes in

¹ "If you know not me, You know no bodie : Or, The troubles of Queene Elizabeth," printed 1605, 2nd part, 1606, treating of the story of Elizabeth as princess, then as queen. Modern ed. Shakespeare Society, 1851, and "Works." Heywood published an historical essay on the same subject: "England's Elizabeth," 1631.

² "The First and Second Partes of King Edward the Fourth. Containing His mery pastime with the Tanner of Tamworth. . . . Likewise the besieging of London by the Bastard Falconbridge . . ." (a very long-tailed title), printed 1600, ed. Field, Shakespeare Society, 1842; a chorus, as in the "Fair Maid" and in Shakespeare's "Henry V.," gives notice of the changes of place. Jane Shore dies there some thirty years before the true date. The play was revived and remodelled by Rowe in the eighteenth century, and borrowed from Rowe by Népomucène Lemercier in the nineteenth: "Richard III. et Jeanne Shore, imité de Shakespeare et de Rowe" (especially from Rowe), 1824; the French author flatters himself he has "sans cesse inventé en imitant," and offers excuses for having taken a few liberties with the rule of the three unities.

the Tower and the crimes of Richard III. Armies in battle array, gallows and an execution on the stage, merry jests of "Hobs, the tanner of Tamworth," the storming of London, with a fierce cannonade and soldiers falling dead on the boards, a ghost, a dumb-show, the repentance of Jane, pardoned at last by her husband : all these means of interesting the public had done duty numberless times, and these same personages, too ; but the spectators were not at all tired of them, and the author in using this style was playing a safe game.

More expert, more self-controlled, more prolific, more highly gifted and less scrupulous than any others, more representative therefore of the impending transformations, two friends shone on the stage at the same period, with such brilliancy as to outshine Shakespeare's fame in the great man's lifetime, and long after. Beaumont and Fletcher had a considerable dose of talent and a small dose of genius.¹ From the day they first knew each other,

¹ Both belonged to a much more refined milieu than most of the dramatists of the period. John Fletcher, the elder of the two (1579-1625), long survived Francis Beaumont (1584-1616). Both had studied at the University ; they settled at Southwark near the Globe, living in the same lodgings. Numerous attempts have been made to ascertain what was the work of each in their plays. Critics have been guided by what we think we know of the talent of both ; of Beaumont's better taste and Fletcher's peculiarities, the latter often breaking the monotony of his blank verse (and making it easier to write) by the addition of superfluous syllables. But the best informed, the most conscientious, the cleverest, disagree. The difficulty is increased by the fact that, for many plays, we have the date of the first edition, not of the performance ; so that it is not always possible to argue as often as one might be tempted to do, that the date of Beaumont's death excludes the possibility of his collaboration. First collected ed. "Comedies and Tragedies written by F. Beaumont and J. Fletcher, Gentlemen," 1647, fol., dedicated to Philip, Earl of Pembroke, by the editors, viz. players, several of whom had been among Shakespeare's most notable companions. "Works," ed. Dyce, 1843, 11 vols. ; "Variorum edition," by Bell and Bullen, London, 1905, ff., interesting facsimiles and notes for each play ; or ed. A. R. Waller, Cambridge, 1905, ff. Cf. Koepfel, "Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen . . . Beaumont's und Fletcher's," Leipzig, 1895 ; A. H. Thorndike, "The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakspeare," Worcester, Mass. 1901.

they wrote in collaboration; very fecund, leaving some fifty or sixty plays, drawing from the most varied sources, and especially from Spain, they used all styles and tried all *genres*. A friendly hand selecting with care, and placing apart choice scenes, could compel admiration, now for their tragical vigour, now for their eloquence and poetry, now for the wit and gaiety of their dialogues: and the reader would thus get the falsest idea of their work. Such a reader would be charmed by the familiar scenes where the London grocer and his worthy spouse ("Sweet lamb . . . —What is it, mouse?"), seated on the stage, interrupt the play, comment upon it, have it modified to suit their taste, and request endless explanations because they cannot understand what is going on—a lively satire on the ordinary London public.¹ No less keenly would the same reader enjoy the scene in which the poor Cordova curate, Don Lopez, exchanges with his sexton melancholy thoughts on their "thin stipends," and on that famous Spanish famine, the subject of so many plays and novels, always cheerfully borne, and which still raises a laugh in the *sarzueltas* of to-day. Arrives Leandro, a young love-stricken gentleman, who gives himself out as a student fresh landed from "Nova Hispania," and the bearer of a letter from Don Alonzo Tiverià, his father, for the curate. The priest reads, shrugs his shoulders,

¹ "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," acted 1606-7 (E. K. Chambers, *Mod. Lang. Rev.* IV. 160), pr. 1613, modern ed. by H. S. Murch, "Yale Studies," 1908; hints taken from "Don Quixote"; adventures of an apprentice roaming the country around London in the guise of a knight errant. Another story (loves of the apprentice Jasper, at one time disguised as his own corpse) is mixed up with the first, and surpasses it in improbability. A third, and in reality the main source of interest, consists in the doings of the grocer and his wife, supposed spectators in the pit, who have climbed on to the stage and seated themselves there among the gentlemen to see the play. The spectators did not appreciate "the privy marke of ironie about it," and finding that their own stupidity was in fact derided, "utterly rejected" the play (Printer's Dedication, 1613).

and declares with truth that he knows no such man. The sexton encourages him in his mistrust: "Take heed of a snap, sir; h'as a cozening countenance." Leandro insists: there can be no mistake, and yet "you look, sir, as if you had forgot my father"; don't you remember, you were chamber-fellows at Salamanca?—No, the curate does not remember.—I, then, must have erred; perhaps the real man is dead and you are a namesake;

I thank ye, gentlemen;
Ye have done honestly in telling truth;
I might have been forward else; for to that Lopez,
That was my father's friend, I had a charge,
A charge of money, to deliver, gentlemen;
Five hundred ducats, a poor small gratuity:
But, since you are not he—

Lopez. Good sir, let me think,
I pray ye, be patient; pray ye, stay a little:
Nay, let me remember; I beseech ye, stay, sir.

And all the details begin to recur to his mind; the sexton also remembers:

Methinks, already
A grave staid gentleman comes to my memory.

They vie with each other in recalling particulars. They have even memories of how Leandro himself behaved when a child:

Diego. I have dandled ye, and kissed ye, and play'd with ye,
A hundred and a hundred times, and danced ye
And swung ye in my bell-ropes—ye loved swinging.

Lopez. A sweet boy!

Leandro, rich, and free with his money, and feigning timidity when that can serve, thenceforth directs events at will, and leads every personage in the play to his

own ends, and in particular the pretty and frail Amaranta.¹

Reading scenes of this kind, and reading no others, one might take Beaumont and Fletcher for the precursors of Goldsmith and Sheridan.² But these sparks of honest merriment are rare in comparison with what forms the groundwork of their dramas; the lugubrious and especially the ribald *genres* were their true domain. They exploited it so thoroughly that even at the Restoration, in spite of the greatest good-will, it was not found possible to go beyond them. Hence the renewed success of their plays at that period. They wrote as precursors of Dryden rather than as heirs of Shakespeare or ancestors of Sheridan.

Shakespeare composed his coarse scenes to amuse

¹ "The Spanish Curate," by Fletcher, and probably Massinger, acted 1622; drawn from a Spanish novel by G. de Cespedes, "Poema tragico del Español Gerardo, y desengaño del amor lascivo," Barcelona, 1618 (in prose), translated into English by Leonard Digges: "Gerardo, the Unfortunate Spaniard, or a pattern for lascivious lovers," 1622. See also, as an example of amusing low comedy, the scene between Bacurius and the three cowards in "A King and no King" (but the play itself of revolting immorality), acted before 1611, pr. 1619, the work of Beaumont and Fletcher.

² See, for example, in "The Scornful Ladie" (the work of the two friends, acted about 1609, pr. 1616), the scene where Elder Loveless returns under a disguise and announces his own death to his spendthrift and not over-scrupulous younger brother. The prodigal makes him repeat ten times that the death is real, certain, undoubted, no reappearance is possible, he then exclaims:

Thou dost not see me moved;
These transitory toys ne'er trouble me;
He's in a better place, my friend; I know't.
Some fellows would have cried now, and have cursed thee,
And fall'n out with their meat, and kept a pother;
But all this helps not: He was too good for us,
And let God keep him!

ii. 2. Same device in "The London Prodigal," 1st ed. 1605, anonymous; text in C. F. T. Brooke, "The Shakespeare Apocrypha," 1908, p. 191: return of Flowerdale senior, "a merchant trading at Venice," bringing the news of his own death.

coarse audiences. Beaumont and Fletcher meant their indecencies to please as such, because indecent rather than because comical. They succeeded, and had a number of imitators. In the epistle to the reader, prefacing the 1647 edition of their works, Shirley, the dramatist, wrote that, "but to mention [them, was] to throw a cloud upon all former names, and benight Posterity ; this book being, without flattery, the greatest monument of the scene that Time and Humanity have produced"; these plays, full of wit and wisdom, have "made Blackfriars an Academy," where youth has been better taught than by any "costly, dangerous foreign travel." There "the very pleasure did edifie."

What pleasure, and what means of edification ! Beaumont and Fletcher really wrote in advance for the contemporaries of Charles II., and prepared for the merry monarch his cortège of "idle rogues," to use Mr. Pepys's words. Dryden compliments the two friends on it ; he is full of indulgence for their methods, and most naturally : to applaud theirs was to praise his own. Those lessons which, according to Shirley, they gave to youth, consisted chiefly in teaching it to scorn the scruples and modesty of former days. How absurd to attach such importance to acts so natural ! Why deprive oneself of pleasures within one's reach ? They even went so far as to say : Why risk one's life when it is possible to risk somebody else's instead ? Philaster, the hero of one of their principal plays, a young prince dispossessed by a wicked uncle (one more variant of Hamlet), wounds his faithful page because, owing to certain circumstances, the scar will cause the page to be credited with a cowardly murder of which Philaster himself is the author. Is Philaster dishonoured by such a deed ? Old-time people might have thought so ; nowadays he remains the hero of the drama ; he

marries in the end the beautiful princess, and recovers the rich duchy.¹

The page Bellario is there for contrast; in Shakespeare such contrasts seemed to us, at times, too marked; what shall we say of these? Here we have a Bellario, all virtue and sweetness (in reality a maid disguised as a page), opposed to a series of lubric and ferocious monsters; a chaste Aspatia opposed to an impure Evadne; an Ordella, all white and almost diaphanous, contrasted with a Brunhalt who is all vice.²

But the great means of exciting interest, to which these authors oftenest resorted, was indecency. The fact is the more remarkable that they had perfect mastery over themselves; they were not carried away by a fiery genius; they did and said what they chose; their style is correct; they were poetical when they pleased, and not in spite of themselves, at any time, and even at all times, like Shakespeare. They could, when it suited them, plead in favour of virtue as well as of vice,³ but the case occurs less often, and their eloquence is colder. Examples of bad taste are very rare with them. Fletcher lovingly composes his "Faithful Shepherdess,"⁴ and the music of his lines is

¹ "Phylaster. Or Love lyes a Bleeding. Acted at the Globe by his Majesties Servants," performed ab. 1609, pr. 1620, the work of the two friends, revived at the Restoration. Dion, another hero in the same play, lies unscrupulously, in view, he alleges, of making known the truth. Persuaded that Arethusa has yielded to Bellario (who is a woman), he swears to having seen them:

In short, my lord, I took them; I myself.

"The Tragedy of Thierry . . . and . . . Theodoret . . . acted at the Blacke Friers," printed 1621; "The Maides Tragedy," also acted at the Blackfriars, pr. 1619, performed some ten years earlier, fine tragical, but very *risqué* scene: marriage of Evadne and Amintor; both plays by the two dramatists.

³ See, for instance, the fine pleadings of Celia, bringing about somewhat suddenly, however, the conversion of the monster Antigonus.—"Humorous Lieutenant," act iv.

⁴ "The Faithfull Shepherdesse," by Fletcher alone, pr. ab. 1610. On Fletcher and D'Urfé, see Upham, "French Influence in Engl. Literature," 367 ff.

of enchanting sweetness ; his landscapes have the dignity and peacefulness of Poussin's pictures. His pastoral delights the ear and eye ; but as for the heart or the mind, nothing is provided for them, except the poet's usual condiments: shameless immorality and the customary contrast between absolute black and absolute white, between beautiful Clorin, so virtuous that she remains faithful to a dead lover, and precocious Cloe, in love with love, and so vicious as to make the very satyrs blush at her sight.

In spite of the charm of the verse and of the number of immodest speeches and sights, the play fell ; revived under Charles II., it enjoyed a prolonged success, and these different fortunes are characteristic of the two periods. Fletcher had so truly written as a precursor of the Restoration that he scarcely belonged to his own time. The kind of immorality which best pleased theatre-goers about 1610 was still that which raised a laugh, but the elegant immorality of free-spoken fine gentlemen and ladies, with all their calculating and reasoning, that deliberate, mirthless immorality which has since been the attraction of so many novels, did not yet excite interest on the stage ; its day had not arrived.

As much as is materially possible, "ce qu'on ne doit pas voir," is what Beaumont and Fletcher, and their peers likewise, delight to exhibit. Merry farces and lugubrious dramas as well, are usually sullied by their perverse imagination. To heighten interest, they give their monsters historical names. In the "Humorous Lieutenant," a supposedly humorous play, a crew of procurers go about the realm to provision with women one of the successors of Alexander ; the price of the feminine cattle is discussed on the stage, and all the fun in this comedy, highly praised by many critics, consists in jokes on the shameful physical ills of the Lieutenant.¹

¹ As soon as his health improves he loses all his courage : this ridiculous

If one wants to have an idea of the degree of indecency, gruesomeness and improbability to which they could lower their art, one should read "*Thierry and Theodoret*," an unpleasant task!¹ No more loathsome devilry can well be imagined. Astrologers, trap-doors, subterranean passages,² wonderful poisons which prevent a victim's eyes from closing and in the end cause death, other potions of a tragi-comical effect (a constant use of potions is made in the theatre of this period), murders, and debauch worse than in the "*Tour de Nesles*": all the implements of latter-day romanticism are there. But there is besides an unceasing exhibition of the lowest vices, shown through magnifying glasses, leisurely, again, and yet again. Old Brunhalt combines the temperament of Messalina and of Nero; murders and debauches fill her time and the play; she moves about ever escorted by the loathsome servants of her pleasures: a paramour, a procurer, and a physician, all equally indispensable. The execution or murder of all the personages brings this dark noisome tale to an end.

No one ever showed more disdain for history than these University-bred authors when they wrote on historical subjects. In "*Thierry and Theodoret*," the scene of which is laid in the seventh century of our era, kings fear Jupiter,

idea supplies the subject of the principal comic scenes. Almost cured at one time, he faints from fright on hearing the report of a pistol—fired in the fourth century B.C.: surprise was excusable. The play was first acted in 1619; it is not one of their worst; they have some the subject of which cannot even be told. Mr. Pepys twice saw the "*Humorous Lieutenant*," which, like so many plays by these authors, was revived at the Restoration; on the first occasion, 1661, he "liked the manner of it"; on the other he declared the play a "silly" one, 166[7].

¹ Of uncertain date, printed 1621. Massinger had perhaps some part in it.

² One with a trap-door opening behind Theodoret's throne in the ball-room of his palace. By order of the queen-mother, Protaldy, her paramour, comes out of the trap, stabs Theodoret in the midst of a fête, and disappears without any one noticing him. Brunhalt pacifies indignant Thierry by assuring him that his brother was in reality the son of a gardener.

invoke Diana, send their mothers to a nunnery and fire cannon. Exaggeration is the life and mainstay of this theatre. In "Bonduca," probably by Fletcher alone, a fanciful tragi-comedy on Queen Boadicea, and the strangest medley of intrigue, buffoonery, and romantic adventures (with some rare passages of true eloquence¹), Caratach is as far from nature by his generosity as Brunhilt was, in the other play, by her vices; a Roman captain, having seen one of Bonduca's daughters die courageously, falls in love with the dead maid, though "she stinks by this time strongly."²

Encouraged by success, playwrights cultivated the immodest and the sanguinary *genres* more and more; some of them even went against their natural bent in order to reach fame by this road, then the shortest. Whole plays or separate scenes written in this style are numerous in the works of many of Shakespeare's contemporaries and of most of his successors. "Is there any good bawdry in it, jests an ell deep and a fathom broad, good cuckolding?" says a spectator put on the stage, Jonson-wise, by John Day.—"Chaste ears would never endure it, sir," an actor answers.—"Chaste ears? . . . What should chaste ears

¹ See, amongst others, the one where Pœnius predicts the defeat of the Romans:

See that huge battle moving from the mountains!
Their gilt coats shine like dragons' scales, their march
Like a rough tumbling storm; see them and view 'em,
And then see Rome no more.

"Bonduca" was acted before March, 1619, the date of the death of Burbage who played in it.

² What do I ail, i' the name of Heaven? I did but see her,
And see her die; she stinks by this time strongly,
Abominably stinks. . . .
I have the bots . . . the plain bots!
A plague upon the bots, the love bots! (v. 2.)

The bots, "worms which trouble cattle in the intestines."

do at a play? . . . Well, I'll sit out the play. . . . But see it be bawdy, or by this light, I and all my friends will hiss."¹

The lowering of taste and the debasement of the methods for pleasing are manifest. It was surely tempting Heaven and provoking the puritanical reaction; punishment was not to be long delayed. This theatre sickens now, and saddens the reader. Neither the cleverness of the dialogue, nor the elegance of the style, nor the dexterity displayed in the handling of many scenes that anthology makers have extracted from this darksome chaos can compensate the hideousness of all the rest. When one has read some dozens of these filthy dramas, burlesque and gruesome, with their mixture of overpraised literary gifts and unspeakable grossness, all weighed, remembered and judged, a souvenir given to Charles Lamb's indulgent appreciations and to Swinburne's eloquent pleadings, an unconquerable desire seizes one to go up to Saint Etienne-du-Mont and lay a laurel branch in the chapel where Racine sleeps.

III.

Less ambitious, steadier, the "empirical" school has left a far greater quantity of enduring monuments. The teachings of Jonson, its protagonist, were fruitful. If historical drama, worthy of the name, was short-lived, familiar comedy had a long and brilliant career; it prepared the advent of the novel of manners, and it may be said therefore that what it undertook three centuries ago, still lasts. It accustomed people to perceive

¹ Prologue to the "Ile of Guls," pr. 1606, drawn from Sidney's "Arcadia." To conform to the new tastes, Day gives to the young princesses in his play a coarseness of tone which would have made Sidney shudder. "Works," ed. Bullen, London, 1881, 410.

the interest there is in the little incidents of every-day life and in the feelings and customs of the generality of men. Some precautions had to be taken : plays entirely filled with such elements would have seemed dull to a public still athirst for wonders ; concessions were indispensable. The members of the "tribe of Ben" had therefore to complicate their intrigues, to add strange adventures and farcical scenes, in order to secure the goodwill of their audiences. These causes of success are now the dead portions of their works, and, as they could scarcely dispense with them, few of their dramas survive in their entirety.

A sign of the times, showing the diffusion of the Jonsonian doctrine, is the number of authors who, from the beginning of the century, accepted the "empirical" tenets. Even the great slaughterers of the other school occasionally tried this style, and one is astonished and charmed to see them succeed when following Truth, after they had so long and so unpleasantly failed while wallowing in gory mud. Alone or in collaboration, Marston, Fletcher, Beaumont, Ford, Massinger, and their most indecent or most sanguinary peers, show a capacity for painting, with an accurate brush, homely and comical scenes from nature. The period is, for this branch of art, one of marked prosperity, and here we have one of the most original and memorable sides of English literature under James I.

The method is applied to historical drama. Chronicles are read with more care ; following the example of their master Jonson, the authors belonging to this group attach importance to accuracy. They consider that great events are interesting in themselves, and they increase the part of truth in their plays and diminish that of fancy. Ford, the typically sombre dramatist, adapts for the stage the History of Henry VII. due to "a late both learned and honourable pen," that of Bacon, and follows, to the best of

his ability, the recent and already classical text of the great thinker. His intention is to renovate a style that was falling into disuse, and show how one can be at once truthful and dramatic :¹ for men like Ford, Holinshed was a mere story-teller, not a historian.² Chapman the translator of Homer, learned, conscientious, and a true poet, had, to be sure, taken great liberties in his "Cæsar and Pompey," but this was a youthful attempt; in his "Bussy d'Ambois" he had employed the romantic style, with secret passages, unbridled loves, disguises and copious massacres, but it well fitted such a story, as was shown by Dumas the elder when he treated the same theme in his "Dame de Montsoreau."³ In "The Conspiracie and

¹ Studies have of this nature been of late
So out of fashion, so unfollowed. . .

Ford will react :

He shows a history couched in a play.

Prologue of his "Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck. A Strange Truth," printed in 1634. Several passages are transcribed almost word for word from Bacon, *e.g.*, part of Warbeck's speech to the Scottish king (ii. 1) ; Bacon, "Works," vol. vi. 1890, p. 163. Bacon himself had called Perkin's story "a play." Compare with the dramas of this class Middleton's "Game at Chesse," 1624, pr. 1625, half morality, half representation of contemporary events, each personage being, at the same time, a piece in the game of chess and a real personage; the whole directed against Spain and the Catholics. The Ambassador Gondomar, who figured in the play as the Black Knight, and whose part was taken by an actor dressed in a suit of clothes which had belonged to him, complained and caused the representations to be stopped. "Works of Middleton," ed. Bullen, vol. vii. ; cf. Jonson's ironical allusion in "The Staple of News," iii. 2.

² In Shirley's comedy, "Hyde Park," acted 1632, the disdainful Carol says to her lover :

. . . I had rather hear the tedious tales
Of Hollinshed, than anything that trenches
Of love. (i. 2.)

³ George Chapman, born about 1559 (above, II. pp. 372, 412 ff.), figured for the first time in Henslowe's diary in February, 159[6], on the occasion of his "Blinde Begger of Alexandria," one of the wildest and most popular of his plays. He lived until 1634, highly considered by men of letters, but, like most

Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron,"¹ however, Chapman's care for historical accuracy and for the truth of human sentiments is admirable. Jonson did not conform more exactly to Tacitus than Chapman to Pierre Mathieu and other contemporaries:² for the events were of yesterday; the execution of Biron was quite recent, and Henri IV. of France, the other hero of the play, was still on the throne when the tragedy was performed. Having the instinct of the historian, Chapman is able to feel with the men he describes, and to speak from the loyalist point of view of the French king's subjects; he believes it possible to interest his English audience in Frenchmen of real life and of history, represented, some of them, as neither cowards nor braggarts, but as honest, noble, and courageous; he deems that the view of any such will not prove insufferable to his public.³

authors who were only authors, in great poverty. "Works," ed. Shepherd, 1874, 3 vols. Main tragical works: "Cæsar and Pompey," pr. 1631, but written long before; "Bussy D'Ambois," pr. 1607 (on the date of composition, see Parrott, who concludes for 1603-4, *Modern Language Review*, January, 1908); "The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois," pr. 1613, both reprinted by Boas, "Belles Lettres Series," Boston and London, 1905 (marked influence of Seneca, Marlowe and Shakespeare, resemblances between the part of Clermont in the "Revenge," and that of Hamlet, but clumsy handling of the supernatural, see the dance of ghosts in the "Revenge," v. 5); "The Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron, Marshall of France," pr. 1608. "The Tragedie of Chabot Admirall of France," pr. 1639, is the work of Chapman and Shirley; historical truth is less well observed than in the Byron plays; reprinted by Ezra Lehman, Philadelphia, 1906. Chabot had for emblem or "impresa" (cf. above, p 270), a foot-ball, with the motto, well justified by his career: "Concussus surgo"; his tomb, one of the masterpieces of the Renaissance, is in the Louvre.

¹ ". . . Acted lately in two playes at the Black-Friers. Printed by G. Eld for Thomas Thorppe, and are to be sold at the Tygers head in Paules Church-yard," 1608. In "Thomas Thorppe" is to be recognised the T.T. o. Shakespeare's sonnets (above, p. 227).

² Cayet and Jean de Serres. Mr. F. S. Boas has shown that Chapman knew them all through Edward Grimeston's compilation: "A General Inventorie of the Historie of France . . . continued unto these times . . . translated out of French," 1607; *Athenæum*, January 10, 1903.

³ Some passages were modified at the request of the French ambassador, La Boderie. One of these was a scene in which the Queen Mother met

The Henri IV. of his play is already the popular king whom we know, valiant, witty, ready to pardon, kind but no weakling, clear-sighted enough to foresee treasons which he will be generous enough to condone, but immovable at last when the event has shown the irremediable worthlessness of the conspirator. Mere details, historically exact, the king's grey beard, his fondness for tennis, are not forgotten. The poet has so completely identified himself with the men and events he portrays that one of his assertions was afterwards verified, and turned out to have been a prophecy. He had caused the inimical Duke of Savoy to say :

There are so oft attempts made 'gainst his person,
That sometimes they may speed, for they are plants
That spring the more for cutting, and at last
Will cast their wished shadow : mark ere long.¹

The author's care in depicting men's minds is no less remarkable than his accuracy when narrating historical events. From a merely human point of view, and setting aside its historical exactness, Biron's character is as true to nature as Macbeth's. Boundless pride, marred by vanity fills the marshal's soul, rises as high as his valour, surpasses his services. A warrior now warless, ill-disposed already because the king is for peace, he inhales incense, enraptured by the honours and attentions bestowed on him.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil (both of them still alive) and boxed her ears. The ambassador wanted the author to be imprisoned ; the players were, but Chapman escaped ; see E. K. Chambers, *Modern Language Review*, IV. 158. A letter from the dramatist, published by Mr. Dobell, shows his indignation at some "informer" having, "with the Gall of a Wulff," awakened the attention of the ambassador who, without such help, would never probably have suspected what was going on at the Blackfriars ; the matter, on the other hand, was "so far from offence, and of so much honor for his maister." E. Lehman, "The Tragedie of Chabot," Philadelphia, 1906, pp. 13, 15.

¹ Part I. iii. 1.

Incense is the source of his happiness, his heaven¹—his poison. Let him be deprived of it and, like maniacs deprived of their drug, he will commit crimes to get some. By flattering his vanity and making him believe he has been wronged, disdained, insufficiently recompensed, one will bring him to the very verge of treason; so near indeed that a mere caress, the least breath, will cause his fall. This is understood perfectly by the crafty Duke of Savoy, another character admirably portrayed. To unravel his plots, all Henri's cleverness is needed, combined with all his courage. The scene in which the Duke of Savoy extols the merits of Biron, increasing by degrees the dose of praise, until the king, who at first had agreed, ceases to keep pace, for it has become impossible, betokens the true psychologue and the master dramatist. The least hesitation to follow, the slightest doubt as to the appropriateness of exorbitant praise, is all that the perfidious duke wanted; the king's words, properly seasoned, will be reported to Biron.

The language is energetic and spirited; the ample patches of splendid poetry so frequent in Shakespeare are rare, but striking images abound:

We must ascend to our intentions' top,
Like clouds that be not seen till they be up.

The king in the play pronounces noble words, worthy of the king in history, no mean compliment to the former. He is full of pity for the poverty-stricken subjects he found in his realm at his accession; those unfortunate peasants, horrible "with their pale leanness . . ."

Wandering like ghosts affrighted from their graves;
When, with the often and incessant sounds,
The very beasts knew the alarum bell,
And, hearing it, went bellowing to their home.²

¹ Interested advances being made to him at the archduke's court, he exclaims, "I am here in heaven" (Part I. i. 1).

² Part II. i. 1.

Chapman likes to meditate and moralise on events, and thus one more element of the historian's art finds place in the drama. Mythological reminiscences abound with him, and this is an untoward consequence of his being so learned. In some of his plays Shakespeare provisioned his favourite personages with conceits and far-fetched witticisms; Chapman supplies his, as a sign of his goodwill, with classical allusions and quotations.¹

To the conscientious observation of human nature is due what there is of permanent interest in Chapman's comedies and in the whole comic theatre of his time. Most playwrights continue, it is true, as in the heyday of the Elizabethan period, to compose romantic dramas with surprises, extraordinary adventures, impossible events happening in Arcady, in Utopia, or in an Italy, an Egypt, or a Levant scarcely more real. True, too, almost all of them, Chapman included, and uncouth Marston, and Beaumont and Fletcher, and Middleton, and others besides, give free play to their fancy in masques, ballets, occasional pieces, which the court and "cavalier" society delight in more and more, as the hour of the great catastrophe draws near. But their originality does not appear in these writings; all they say there had already been said better, or at least as well. The most enduring part of their work was the most modest, the part in which they spoke, in plain language, about plain folks whom they knew. To a greater or lesser extent they all succeeded; it was for this kind of study a really favoured period.

Specimens of such writings were already in existence, for, in literary matters, nothing begins suddenly. The most famous was the "Merry Wives of Windsor," in

¹ Thus, for example, the touching speech of the king to the infant dauphin, "Byron," II. i. 1, ends with an imitation of the parting words of Hector to Astyanax, in the "Iliad."

which, however, a good many incidents out of the common were mingled with scenes among middle-class people. Events in real life had also found place, as we saw, in plays of a special kind which enjoyed an early popularity, and were, in fact, only doleful ballads turned into dramas, their subject being some recent sensational murder. As the characters, in such cases, were men still alive, or only just dead, and assassins whose hanging everybody had witnessed, authors were bound to keep rather close to reality.¹ But from the beginning of the seventeenth century the field of these studies from life broadens considerably. It seems as if authors and public had begun, at length, to be somewhat surfeited with extraordinary events, not, it is true, to the extent of giving them up entirely, but with the result that an admixture of scenes copied from nature was more and more wanted and welcome. In most of the comedies of this sort, a far larger place is still given to intrigue and adventures than in the theatre of a Molière, but intrigue and adventures are no longer the whole play, and its durable interest springs from a different source.

The type of such comedies is Chapman, Marston, and

¹ The specimens are very numerous. As events which were the talk of the day supplied the subject of the work, the success with the crowd was infallible; above, p. 128. The plays with witches (these unfortunate women were still executed) form an important subdivision of this kind of drama; see, for example, "The Witch of Edmonton," by Rowley, Dekker, Ford—"etc.," the title adds, for more certainty—acted ab. 1623, pr. 1658. The witch represented in this play (with scenes of magic, a dog that speaks, apparitions, murders, a scene of madness, a march to the scaffold) had been executed in 1621.—"The late Lancashire Witches," by Heywood and Brome, acted and printed in 1634, deals with events of the year 1633.—King James, as is well known, had done his best to draw attention to "the fearefull abounding at this time, in this countrey, of these detestable slaves of the Divil, the witches," and had refuted, to his own complete satisfaction, the arguments of "one called Scot, an Englishman" (the enlightened Reginald Scot), who had not been "ashamed in publike print to deny that there can be such a thing as Witch-craft." Preface to his "Dæmonologie, in the forme of a Dialogue," first printed 1597.

Jonson's "Eastward Hoe."¹ The true merit of the play consists in the simplicity of its construction, in the clever observation of contemporary manners and perennial human foibles; lastly, in a gaiety and a kindliness of tone, pleasantly restful after the hatreds, massacres, and debauches displayed elsewhere *ad nauseam*. We have done with Mantua, Pisa, Padua; dukes and duchesses trouble us no more; we are in London, the real London of real Londoners, leading real lives in real houses, talking, trading, joking, marrying, going to the play, having their jest at Tamburlaine, and even at Prince Hamlet: "'Sfoot, Hamlet, are you mad?"

Honest Touchstone, a goldsmith of the city, has two daughters, the modest Mildred, whom he marries to his apprentice, the kindly, serious-minded Golding, and the vain Gertrude, whose dream is to be a lady and the wife of Sir Petronel Flash. Petronel is a knight; his title is undoubtedly his own, as he has purchased it. Mrs. Touchstone encourages her aspiring daughter and snubs her husband: "Yes, that he is a knight: I know where he had the money to pay the gentlemen-ushers and heralds their fees. Ay, that he is a knight, and so might have you been too, if you had been aught else than an ass." The goldsmith is doubtful, and tries to get information about the personage from his apprentice, who answers: "The best I can say of him is I know him not." Gertrude talks sport and elegant life, gets mixed, confuses *balloon* and *baboon*, and prisons herself in a huge Scotch farthin-

¹ Printed 1605, "as it was playd in the Black-friers"; text, *e.g.*, in "Works of Marston," ed. Bullen, vol. iii., or ed. Schelling, "Belles Lettres Series" (old-spelling preserved). The authors were sent to prison for some satirical remarks, afterwards suppressed, on Scotchmen. On the sources of the play, see Curtis, *Modern Philology*, July, 1907, p. 107. Same class and period, "The Miseries of inforst Marriage," by Wilkins, pr. 1607, a satire on interested marriages; much clumsiness, but an excellent opening scene, and a curious study of the manners of the day.

gale in the latest fashion. "Fine and stiffly, i'faith," says the tailor; "'twill keep your thighs so cool, and make your waist so small!" Leagued together, the mother and daughter win the day; the nuptials are celebrated in grand style: "I think," observes the unfortunate goldsmith, "we have stowed more sorts of flesh in our bellies than ever Noah's ark received; and for wine, why my house turns giddy with it."

What was sure to happen does occur, and it is quite a rest after so many plays full of surprises to find one with none at all. Gertrude is harsh with her servants, imperious with her husband, rough with her mother, blunt with her sister: "I charge thee, in my ladyship's name, call me sister no more."

Petronel, who in reality has never possessed a farthing, foresees the impending disaster. He mortgages his wife's land, purchases the coach she was longing for, seats her in it ("Now, heaven! methinks I am e'en up to the knees in preferment"), and sends her eastward to visit his ancestral castle, a castle "built with air." As for himself, he secures a passage to America, and prepares to vanish. The scene at the "Blue Anchor," Billingsgate, is again a lively picture from life; it shows how planters then, and many an emigrant since, have been persuaded to go. Virginia, where they are to settle, is a paradise; the women are charming, and it just happens that they have a preference for Englishmen. "Gold is more plentiful there than copper is with us. . . . Why, man, all their dripping-pans and their chamber-pots are pure gold. . . . And for rubies and diamonds, they go forth on holidays and gather 'hem by the seashore." And what pleasant liberty! "There we shall have no more law than conscience, and not too much of either." The voyage has ceased to be such a long one; it is not yet made in six days, but it can be performed in six weeks.

Petronel's journey proves even shorter. He and his fellow-planters get drunk, according to custom; and as they are rowed to their ship on the Thames, the weather being stormy, they capsize, and barely escape drowning. The knight, little desirous of meeting his wife again after her visit to the ancestral castle, roams some time through the vilest haunts of the capital, is caught by a constable and "pressed for the Low Countries" as a "masterless man." He alleges his knighthood; brought before the alderman, whom does he recognise under the magistrate's imposing garb but his brother-in-law, honest Golding, who has followed the right way to the end? Golding inflicts a needful penance on him; the guilty ones repent, are converted and pardoned, and order reigns again in the Touchstone family.

Chapman returned more than once to this homely manner. His theatre contains a good number of sketches and caricatures evidencing his gift of observation, such as his portrait of the upstart diplomat whose head has been turned by his new dignity and gold lace, who thous and thees princes and princesses to show that he knows his rank, but who thereby only shows he is an upstart. As a statesman must be attentive to the merest trifles, he will make choice of a religion:

Then 'twill be expected I shall be of some religion,
I must think of some, for fashion, or for faction sake,
As it becomes great personages to do:
I'll think upon't betwixt this and the day.¹

Chapman's play, "All Fools,"² is a kind of School for

¹ "Monsieur d'Olive. A comedie, as it was sundrie times acted by her Majesties children at the Blacke-Friers," 1606, ii. 1.

² "Al Fooles, A Comedy Presented at the Black Fryers . . . for Thomas Thorpe" (again the T.T. of Shakespeare's sonnets), 1605, reprinted with the "Gentleman Usher" of the same (1st ed. 1606), by T. M. Parrott, "Belles Lettres Series," 1907.

Fathers, the fundamental idea of which, borrowed from Terence, bears comparison with Molière's treatment of the same in his "*École des Maris*" and his "*École des Femmes*," Molière going deeper, giving more prominence to the moral lesson, and soundly chastising his Sganarelle and his Arnolphe. With Chapman, the desire to laugh and make others laugh somewhat weakens the teaching ; we have, however, excellent portraits of an indulgent father and a severe one ; the first, who thoroughly knows his son's heart, hears of a secret marriage entered into by his son, and says :

I assure myself
He did it more to satisfy his love,
Than to incense my hate, or to neglect me.

The other father leaves his son in the country wholly occupied with agricultural pursuits, as Arnolphe was to keep Agnès busy sewing "*ses chemises de nuit et ses coiffes*." This father laughs at the other, chuckles over the mishaps caused by his indulgence, and shows with pride his own virtuous heir, the model young man who thinks only of his duties :

He dares not look a woman in the face.

The youth is moreover so very timid that his father has to chide him for his excessive reserve, and by a comical trait of character shames him for being so timorous by narrating the exploits of his own young days.

The good man takes too much pains. It turns out, of course, that the timorous son is a model rake, a gamester, and drinker ; it is he, not the other, who has married secretly. Indulgence triumphs and severity would be punished if the play did not end in laughter, and if the author did not make us understand that we should not

ourselves be too severe on those who are not indulgent enough.

Personages of this stamp have their public, no less than sanguinary dukes and incestuous duchesses; for which reason, in the first case as in the second, numerous copies of the same originals are to be found in the theatre of the period. Three or four specimens of supposedly timid young men, or ridiculous statesmen, enlivened audiences at the same time. The upstart ambassador reappears in Marston;¹ this diplomat is chiefly concerned about questions of ceremonial and etiquette, which others settle for themselves by habit or instinct, without pondering over them, and especially without babbling about them. As for the knowledge of men, manners, and affairs, it has its importance, doubtless, for our ambassador, but a lesser one; secretaries must be of some use, his secretary will see to that: "I would I were better travelled, that I might have been better acquainted with the fashions of several countrymen: but my secretary, I think he has sufficiently instructed me."² Many scenes of low life, also, besides these: Marston there is quite at his ease; taverns

¹ In a dark drama, with the customary ferocious duke and libidinous duchess: "The Malcontent," acted about 1601, printed 1604, with an interesting induction by Webster, in which the principal players in Shakespeare's troupe, Burbage, Sly, Condell, etc., figure under their own names; written when the play, which had been first acted at the Blackfriars, was transferred to the Globe. It was dedicated, in the most flattering terms, by Marston to his ex-enemy Ben Jonson. Another satire of courtly people, by the same, in "Parasitaster, Or The Fawne," printed 1606.

² III. 2; "Works," Bullen, i. p. 258. Further on, some remarks so true to nature that the same are to be found almost exactly in "Mademoiselle de la Seiglière," by Sandeau, who certainly was no reader of Marston: "*Bilioso* (the ambassador). Fool, how dost like my calf in a long stocking?—*Passarello*. An excellent calf, my lord" (v. 1).

"*Le Marquis*. Jasmin, que dis-tu de ça ?

"*Jasmin* (his valet). Assurément Monsieur le Marquis a le plus beau mollet du Poitou.

"*Le Marquis*. Et comme c'est ferme ! . . . Tâte, Jasmin, je te le permets . . . du marbre !" (ii. 3).

and places of ill resort are depicted by him with evident relish; there shines the Marston of past satires, not of future sermons.¹

The pseudo-timid man reappears in Middleton;² his hypocrite has been compared with Sheridan's immortal Joseph Surface; in truth, however, his personage is rather Charles and Joseph Surface merged into one. Lactantio conceals his vices from his good uncle, the Cardinal of Milan, a pompous and credulous prelate, born to be imposed upon; but he does not conceal them from the public, he laughs at them with the whole audience. He never loses his spirits, not even at the hour of his disaster, when, having first thought of the duchess, he has at length to rest satisfied with marrying his page. The little rogue was a woman, and is very near being delivered of a son, on the stage, in the middle of a dancing lesson. Far from complaining of his fate, the pseudo-timid gravely remarks: "Pray, what have you done with the breeches? . . . They are too good to be cast away; my son and heir need not scorn to wear what his mother has left off."

¹ For example, in "The Dutch Courtezan. As it was played at the Blacke-Friars, by the Children of her Majesties Revels" (which children had strange parts to perform and speeches to deliver), printed 1605; great liveliness in the dialogue. See the praise of the heroine's profession: "They sell their bodies; do not better persons sell their souls? . . . Beauty is woman's virtue, love the life's music, and woman the dainties, or second course of heaven's curious workmanship. Since then beauty, love and woman are good, how can the love of woman's beauty be bad?" (i. 1). The merry farce, "Jacke Drums Entertainment," with errors, caricatures of amourists, one of the personages concealed in a bag (a reminiscence of Falstaff in his basket), is attributed by some to Marston; acted about 1600, printed 1601; text, *e.g.*, in Simpson, "School of Shakspeare," 1878, vol. ii.

² "More dissemblers besides Women"; "Works," ed. Bullen, 1885, 8 vols. 8vo, vol. vi.; written about 1622, printed 1657. A pseudo-timid woman appears in his "A Mad World, My Masters," printed 1608. Thomas Middleton, born about 1570, began writing for Henslowe in the early years of the seventeenth century. Appointed "city chronologer" in 1620, he kept the annals of the capital. He often wrote the words for the Lord Mayor's pageants; he died in 1627. On his prose studies, see above, vol. II. pp. 547 ff.

Reading the works of this prolific and powerful author, in which so much space is reserved for impossible adventures, gross caricatures, coarse scenes between bawd, pander, and courtesan, those hackneyed characters,¹ one may hesitate to decide which school he belongs to, so numerous are the traits connecting him with both. All considered, it will probably be found that the excellence and abundance of scenes where all the interest centres in conscientious studies of sentiments and manners entitle him to rank among the followers of Truth. For he does not rest satisfied with merely examining passions in their essence and displaying them in their theoretical immutability, according to the usual practice of morality-makers;² but he is able, when he chooses, to note with the minuteness of a true psychologue the way in which they develop or recede when in contact with realities. The same dramatist, who many a time has built plays haphazard, shaky structures, full of intrigues and "errors," can, sometimes, even in the midst of such plays, utter memorable truths, deliver pithy sayings,³ or

¹ One of Mrs. Behn's most loathsome scenes, and proportionately popular, was borrowed by her from Middleton: scene of the lover who falls by a trap-door into something worse than a sewer, "the kennels of hell," he says, and reappears on the stage "dung wet." "Blurt Master-Constable," by Middleton, iv. 2, printed 1602; "The Rover," by Mrs. Behn, 1677, act iii., numerous editions.

² Which, it must be confessed, he resorts to himself at times: IIoard, Lucre, Moneylove, etc., in "A Trick to Catch the Old-one," acted in 1607, printed 1608, are scarcely anything more than personages of moralities, that is, personified abstractions.

³ Fools are not at all hours foolish,
No more than wise men wise.

Isabella. I loathe him more than beauty can hate death,
Or age her spiteful neighbour.

"Women beware Women," i. 2, ii. 1; the usual two plots, one of them being the story of Bianca Capello; a very incoherent drama; the catastrophe is once more brought about by the performance of a play within the play; actors and spectators kill one another. "Works," vol. vi.

set up on his feet, in full light, a real-life personage, whose image once seen will never be forgotten. He examines in its several varieties a trait of contemporary manners, the duelling craze, for example.¹ He surpasses himself and eclipses all the poets of his group by writing a romantic drama where the strangeness of the adventures is equalled by the sincerity, realism, and tragical power in the study of passions, "The Changeling," his masterpiece.²

Here tragic force is at its height ; it would be easy to name, in one breath, twenty plays of a better build ; it would be difficult to point out in any theatre a character truer to nature than that of wretched De Flores. Beatrice, daughter of the Governor of Alicant, has been betrothed by her father to a man she loathes. Alsméro, a Spanish nobleman whom she adores, is in despair ; he wants to challenge the betrothed, but Beatrice, trembling for her lover, forbids him. One of the officers of the garrison, De Flores, ugly, poor, and for whom she feels the greatest repulsion, is in love with her. She has nothing but rebuffs for him ; he knows it, and twenty times a day manages to be in her path, to see her and

¹ "A Faire Quarrell," printed 1617 ; see especially the colonel's eloquent statement of his views on the subject, i. 1. As the play proceeds, improbabilities multiply : the idea in an officer that he should defend his mother's name only if he is absolutely sure that she is spotless, is scarcely consistent with human nature, and particularly with the manners of that day. The duelling passion was almost as developed in England as in France. See the series of such fights enumerated by Nicholas Charles in his letter to Sir Robert Cotton, 1613, Ellis's "Original Letters," II. vol. iii. p. 234.

² "The Changeling : As it was Acted (with great Applause) at the Privat house in Drury-Lane and Salisbury Court," printed only in 1653 ; performed in any case at court thirty years before. The title is derived from the under-plot, due to Rowley, and which has nothing to do with the main story. As for the events in the latter, it must be remembered here again that contemporary facts justified the dramatist to a notable extent ; loves and hatreds, a thousand pounds offered for a murder, bawd and apothecary playing their parts, tortures and poisoning, four executions : all this was included in the only too real story of the Countess of Essex, Robert Carr (the king's favourite), and Sir Thomas Overbury, 1613.

receive from her at least an insult ; rather an insult than nothing ! The love poison is in his veins. The marriage day approaches. Beatrice has always feared the officer ; his very face seems to her to betoken misfortunes :

I never see this fellow but I think
Of some harm towards me. . . .
The next good mood I find my father in,
I'll get him quite discarded.

The fatal day is now at hand. What can be done ? De Flores alone would be daring enough to extricate her from this peril. The temptation scene is admirable, and the horrible misunderstanding that will be the outcome of it is worked out with consummate skill. At the first word spoken with no opprobrious accompaniment, De Flores's joy is intense ; he exults, he is beside himself. She sighs sadly, resists, and refuses to explain ; he beseeches her, on his knees, to speak. She at length alludes to her loathing for Piracquo and her anguish at the impending marriage. Is that all ? says De Flores, but this is nothing,

His end's upon him,
He shall be seen no more.

And while she talks of recompense, large sums, flight made easy, De Flores answers vaguely, lets the misunderstanding take its course, and, left alone, says,

O my blood !
Methinks I feel her in mine arms already.

The scene after the murder is even more tragic. With the blindness of passion, which can see nothing but its own object, and has blinkers hiding right and left all difficulties and obstacles, be they as huge as mountains, as deep as precipices, Beatrice has failed to see what would have struck the least attentive looker on : that Flores was not one who could be paid and got rid of, that what he

would exact would be herself, risking, in order to get her, his head and hers too. And, indeed, this would only be doing once more what he had already done in murdering the betrothed ; she had sold herself to the devil.

She struggles blindly. This murder, which she has risked, so as to belong to Alsmereo, and which makes her the prey of abhorred De Flores ! How believe it ? The torture is long and cruel. She is slow to understand ; she offers three thousand gold florins.

De Flores. Do you place me in the rank of verminous fellows,
To destroy things for wages ? offer gold
[For] the life-blood of man ? is anything
Valued too precious for my recompense ?

Beatrice. I understand thee not.

De Flores. I could ha' hir'd
A journeyman in murder at this rate,
And mine own conscience might have [slept at ease]. . . .

Beatrice. I'm in a labyrinth.

She doubles the sum ; she recommends flight ; then, says De Flores, " you must fly too." And as she protests, he exclaims :

Why, are you not as guilty ? in, I'm sure,
As deep as I ; and we should stick together.

Creeping nearer and nearer to his victim, the assassin at last speaks out clearly. We are equals ; don't talk of rank and distance " 'twixt thy blood and mine,"

● Look but into your conscience, read me there ;
'Tis a true book, you'll find me there your equal. . . .
You are the deed's creature ; by that name
You lost your first condition, and I challenge you,
As peace and innocency has turn'd you out,
And made you one with me.

Beatrice. With thee, foul villain !

De Flores. Yes, my fair murderess. . . .

Persist, and I confess, and it will be immediate shame, and thou shalt never belong to Alsmere ; " my life, I rate at nothing." Tears, bribes, supplications, all are in vain :

The wealth of all Valencia shall not buy
My pleasure from me ;
Can you weep Fate from its determin'd purpose ?
So soon may [you] weep me.

Interrupted by farcical scenes ordered from Rowley, who does not seem to have known, when he wrote them, what the principal subject of the play was, the drama moves towards its bloody and inevitable conclusion. De Flores kills Beatrice and himself, exulting even in his disaster, true to himself, to his passion, and to his word. He has reached his end ; he has been Beatrice's lover, and she will have had no other ; nothing else matters to him, not even death.

Plays are written, acted, printed ; talent still abounds. But as it is only talent, and as the old formulas still enjoy favour, reduplications are frequent. Those who leave the beaten track, like Beaumont and Fletcher, are dangerous guides ; it is better not to go where they fain would lead us. If one perchance tries to distinguish himself by preaching virtue, as he has not, like Addison later, the secret of making it appear attractive, his plays are so dull that the actors refuse to perform them, knowing that the public will refuse to listen to them.¹ The wearing out of the tools becomes more and more visible ; it can plainly be perceived in Brome, Randolph,

¹ Such was the case with Thomas Nabbes, time of Charles I. ; " Works," ed. Bullen, 1887, 2 vols. 4to. Nabbes has a fondness for heroes who moralise (but who use somewhat crude terms to describe what they preach against) ; see the part of Theophilus in " The Bride," acted 1638, vol. ii. p. 9. The actors refused to play his " Unfortunate Mother," printed in 1640.

Cartwright, Marmion, Glapthorne;¹ it is striking in James Shirley, and the more so that he is the most gifted of all those secondary dramatists.² Born in 1596, he studied at both Universities, took orders, was converted to Catholicism, became schoolmaster at St. Albans, then settled in London, and began writing for the stage in 1625. His facile and supple talent easily adapted itself to the tastes of the day, which he was careful not to

¹ Richard Brome, servant, then pupil and friend of Jonson—

I had you for a servant once, Dick Brome,

etc. ("Underwoods," xxviii); d. ab. 1652. By him, comedies of manners (unedifying manners sometimes), in which his master's influence is visible, and some romantic dramas; "Dramatic Works," London, Pearson, 1873, 3 vols. 8vo.—Thomas Randolph, 1605–35, "Poetical and Dramatic Works," ed. Hazlitt, 2 vols., submits to the same influence; his "Muses Looking-Glasse," Oxford, 1638, is a crude specimen of a play with "humours." He borrowed from Beaumont and Fletcher the idea of the man believed to be dead, and who has himself conveyed where he wants to go, in his own coffin, an unusual device in real life, but a common one on the stage. By him, again, an adaptation to English manners of Aristophanes's "Plutus," some macaronic language being used: "Thankatus and Godamerciatus, vostra Dignitas," see *infra*, p. 472.—W. Cartwright, 1611–43, an enthusiastic royalist and another pupil of Jonson's; best play, "The Ordinary," acted in 1634, scenes of everyday life in London (in "Comedies," etc., 1651, and in Dodsley, ed. Hazlitt, vol. xii.).—Shackerley Marmion, 1603–39, same school, too many adventures, but fine scenes in his "Antiquary," acted ab. 1636, pr. 1641; the Antiquary sits:

All day in contemplation of a statue
With ne'er a nose, and doats on the decays
With greater love than the self-lov'd Narcissus
Did on his beauty.

"Dramatic Works," ed. Maidment and Logan, 1875, 8vo.—Henry Glapthorne, time of Charles I., "Plays and Poems," 1874, 2 vols. 8vo; by him, "Wallenstein," pr. 1639, treating of contemporary events, but with no care for historical truth; cf. Wetter, "Wallenstein in der dramatischen Dichtung . . ." Frauenfeld, 1894, 8vo. By the same, e.g. an "Argalus and Parthenia," from Sidney's romance, pr. 1639, successfully revived at the Restoration.

² "Dramatic Works and Poems," ed. Gifford and Dyce, London, 1833, 6 vols. 8vo.

thwart. Queen Henrietta-Maria and various noblemen were his patrons, and fortune smiled on him. Then came dark days, the closing of the theatres, the civil war, and the resumption of the former profession of schoolmaster, which he henceforth never abandoned. While his plays were being revived at the Restoration, he was writing grammars and giving new editions of his "*Via ad Latinam Linguam Complana*ta."¹ He and his wife died the same day, shortly after the great fire of 1666. He could have been present, in the course of his career, at first performances of plays by Shakespeare and of plays by Dryden.

Shirley wrote tragedies ; needless to say that they are of the sombre kind. He shows us a variant of the Duchess of Malfy,² and a kind of Lorenzaccio very far from equaling Musset's. In "*The Cardinal*," where the influence of Webster is visible, various officers, priests, and ladies love, stab, and poison each other without causing any emotion, much less surprise. Most inappropriately does "*First Lord*" exclaim, "*This is the age of wonders*"; oft-repeated wonders cease to be wonderful. Like Ophelia's, the duchess's mind becomes deranged by sorrow, and, like stage lunatics in such cases, she talks in indecent and incongruous fashion: all this was according to custom. In "*The Traitor*,"³ Shirley misses his subject, which might have been either the struggle for liberty in an Italian republic, or the secret drama within Lorenzo's heart; he offers us instead the usual picture of the dissolute Italian duke, a quantity of murders, which he hopes will please by their number ("*Here is a heap of tragedies*," says one of his heroes; "*I never heard such killing stories*,"

¹ First ed. 1649 ; fifth, 1660.

² In "*The Cardinal*," licensed 1641. The events take place in the nameless capital of Navarre, or "*on the frontiers*," near another town, also nameless ; in other words, at any time, anywhere.

³ Acted in 1631, printed 1635.

answers another), and for chief tragical effect a love tryst, the bed ready prepared, the maiden at last consenting, the duke drawing the curtains and finding only a corpse : another worn-out effect, borrowed from Tourneur, and already made use of by two or three of his peers.¹

In his comic theatre, we meet once more the people affected with "humours" of the Jonsonian school ;² and besides them a blustering Beatrice, who, instead of facing one Benedick, keeps three at bay : always the same device, to improve on a predecessor by multiplication.³ Shirley's "Hyde Park" has a treble plot ; his "Witty Fair One," a familiar comedy, is in reality a comedy of errors, where one of the personages is induced to believe that he is dead, and the author even makes a more excessive use than in his tragedies of incredible adventures and surprises ; in other words, confines himself to commonplaces.⁴

Shirley belonged to his time, and as he was endowed with talent and there was then a public for the comedy of manners, he tried this style and succeeded in it ; therein lies his greatest merit. His "Lady of Pleasure"⁵ is the best of his plays ; in it he satirises without injustice or harshness failings which he had really observed in a milieu well known to him. Lady Bornwell has left the country, where she met only thick-skulled people :

¹ The same with the scene where Sciarrha beseeches his sister to yield to the duke, and where, in spite of all his threats, she refuses. Sciarrha embraces her ; it was a test. The same idea had already been made to serve by Tourneur. Another device of the same sort, this time an ultra-common one : the play within the play to discover culprits.

² For instance, the part of Sir Solitary Plot in "The Example," acted in 1634 ; humours and peculiarities of people in society ; type of the stay-at-home traveller in "The Ball," by Shirley and Chapman (mainly Shirley), acted 1632.

³ Character of Miss Carol in "Hide Parke," acted in 1632, pr. 1637. An incident in this play causing the appearance of jockeys on the stage (at the Restoration the horses also appeared) was highly relished.

⁴ "The Wittie Faire One," acted in 1628, pr. 1633.

⁵ Acted in 1635, pr. 1637.

. . . their brains
 And barren heads standing as much in want
 Of ploughing as their ground.

Her husband is in despair ; such new-fangled manners,
 such expense, such encumbering of one's life and one's
 house ! that coach of yours,

whose rude postillion
 Must pester every narrow lane, till passengers
 And tradesmen curse your choking up their stalls,
 And common cries pursue your ladyship
 For hindering of their market.

And so many curiosities, pieces of furniture, and pictures :

Your mighty looking-glasses, like artillery
 Brought home on engines ! . . .

After the scene with the husband, other scenes with the
 perfumed fops who come to pay court to the lady, or with
 the painter :

The outlandish man of art is copying out
 Her countenance ;

the man of art is a "Belgic gentleman," an allusion to the
 —more than pardonable—craze for Van Dyck, then at its
 height ; or again scenes with fashionable ladies who speak
 French, want to turn their houses into "academies of wit,"
 and who imitate, to the best of their ability, the manners of
 their Parisian contemporaries, the "Précieuses." "Je vous
 prie, madame," says Lady Bornwell, "d'excuser l'importunité
 de mes affaires qui m'ont fait offenser par mon absence une
 dame de laquelle j'ai reçu tant d'obligations." Will you
 know how mornings are spent by fair ladies of this sort ?

We rise, make fine,
 Sit for our picture, and 'tis time to dine.
Littleworth. Praying's forgot.
Kickshaw. 'Tis out of fashion.

As counterpart, a charming picture of country life in former times—in all times really for those who have known how to lead it, for among quite similar surroundings will one day be spent the life of Sir Roger de Coverley.¹

Bornwell has recourse to the homœopathic method, and by feigning to adopt his wife's tastes, outdoing her in his extravagances, and flinging his money away, he makes her ashamed of her follies and leads her back to a reasonable life.

Licentious scenes interrupt and spoil the comedy : this was a matter of course ; such a condiment was indispensable and Shirley's works are strongly seasoned with it. Better forget these blemishes, and remember only, when the curtain is about to fall, when the Puritans are going to close the theatres, and when the splendid epoch inaugurated under Elizabeth is nearing its end, that Shirley, more than any of his contemporaries, had the merit of bringing us almost within sight of those witty and kindly observers of men and manners, Goldsmith and Addison.

¹ We do not now invite the poor o' the parish
To dinner, keep a table for the tenants ;
Our kitchen does not smell of beef . . .

Nor will three fiddlers upon holidays,
With aid of bagpipes, that call'd in the country
To dance, and plough the hall up with their hob-nails,
Now make my lady merry. (ii. 1.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE AFTERMATH.

AFTER a resplendent summer, a fruitful autumn; then clouds rise in the sky, and winter tempests loom in the distance.

Elizabeth died in 1603; the son of Mary Stuart and Darnley, James VI. of Scotland, I. of England, succeeded her on the throne, and the Elizabethan period continued. It continued but darkened, as autumn continues summer: many fruits, fewer flowers, and these more fragile under a less luminous sky.

The moment is a serious one; some grow wiser, others become morose; it seems as though they felt that they belong to a time near its end: youth and summer flowers, adieu, we must hasten and complete our work before we disappear. The day is declining and the storm threatens. Such an one who had been writing "Venus and Adonis," now gives "Macbeth" and "Othello"; another who had won repute by his "Essays," compiles a "Novum Organum"; another who had been riming madrigals at court, writes in solemn style a "History of the World," to while away his time till the hour when he shall mount the scaffold; that other, who had scandalised his friends by the licentiousness of his lyrical verses, is Dean of St. Paul's and edifies them by his sermons. "The pleasantness of the season displeases me. Every-

thing refreshes and I wither, and I grow older, not better : my strength diminishes, and my load grows. . . ."¹

Remembrances of summer days and presages of winter mingle in this intermediary period. The abundance and savour of the fruits is as noticeable as the symptoms of impending catastrophes. Many have been the disputes concerning the Bible under Elizabeth : the definitive English version appears in 1611, under the first Stuart ; the style is clear, energetic and picturesque, and the work is one of the great monuments of English prose.² People have rambled through the world, discovered territories, planned colonies, gathered spoils and glory, but there have been no lasting settlements ; under James all these efforts bear *fruit*, and the first permanent English colony in America is established in 1607 on the shores of the Chesapeake, in Virginia, "earth's only paradise," says the royal charter. The men now most conspicuous are grave-minded ones : philosophers, savants, discoverers ; Bacon, Selden, Napier who invents logarithms and publishes his "*Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio*" in 1614,³ Harriott, the astronomer and algebraist,⁴ Harvey who discovers, about 1616, the *general* circulation of the blood and prints his "*De Motu Cordis*" in 1628. People are more addicted to meditation ; the school of observation gets the better of the romantic school ; what we have noticed on the stage is to be found in every branch of human knowledge ; many thinkers, many pensive, nay, melancholy men, so general is the anticipation of impend-

¹ Donne to Sir H. G[oodere], 1608 ; "Life and Letters," Gosse, i. 185.

² Reprinted as vols. xxxiii. ff. of the "Tudor Translations" : "The English Bible, translated out of the original tongues by the commandement of King James the First. Anno 1611."

³ Entered in the "Stationers' Registers," as "to be translated into Englishe," January 16, 1615. Arber's Transcript, iii. p. 561.

⁴ "*Artis Analyticæ Praxis ad Æquationes algebraicas resolvendas*," posthumous, 1631. Stenography, invented years before, had become practical only in 1602, through Willis's "*Art of Stenographie*," 14th ed., 1647.

ing convulsions. Bacon will die in dishonour and Raleigh on the scaffold ; Hall will see his episcopal palace and his cathedral sacked, and James himself, the Lord's anointed, king by divine right, far as he was from suspecting the tragical fate in store for his race, could not escape anxieties which have left their trace in his last writings.

I.

In this later season not one great poet makes himself known. Those who had reached fame under Elizabeth continue to reap their harvest of glory ; those who will rise to the highest rank during the forthcoming period are born, grow, learn, and at most print their youthful essays. " 'Tis not," Samuel Daniel was writing then,

in the pow'r of Kings to raise
A spirit for verse that is not borne thereto,
Nor are they borne in every Princes dayes :
For late Eliza's raigne gave birth to more
Then all the Kings of England did before.¹

It seems to the literary traveller that he is traversing an even country with sights scarcely different from those seen before, whilst behind him the Shakespearian sun is setting on inaccessible heights, and the moment has not yet come when, after a darksome dawn, shall glimmer before his steps the light of a day that will be the day of Milton.

Roses are always told how fragile they are. They do not receive the gratitude they deserve for ceaselessly budding afresh. They are among the first to bloom in the spring and among the last to linger in the autumn, perfuming our gardens till the coming of winter frosts. During the darkened period we are now reaching, roses continue to do their duty as roses. Shepherds, more numerous than ever, celebrate, with Breton, Drayton,

¹ Dedication "to the Prince," of "Philotas," 1st ed. 1605.

Browne, Wither, Phineas Fletcher, Brathwaite, Brooke, Basse,¹ and many others, the calm, more and more imaginary, of country life. Ambassador Wotton rimes his famous "Character of a Happy Life," a sort of "Beatus ille," in Horatian vein.² Court poets, less sensible than others of the signs of impending storms, and of the storms themselves, continue the tradition of their elegant, amorous, and disdainful predecessors of Elizabethan days.

Retired in his Scottish manor, the royalist Drummond of Hawthornden turns once more to account, with eloquence and as heartily as if they had never done duty before, the sonnet themes of the previous period: sonnet on sleep, on flowers shedding their leaves, on the passing away of time.³ Man's work cannot last, empires crumble,

¹ "The Poetical Works of W. Basse, 1602-53, now for the first time collected . . . by R. W. Bond," London, 1893, 8vo. Basse, like most of the others, was a pupil of Spenser: "I was Collins loved boy." He left, *e.g.*, nine Pastorals, each devoted to a particular virtue: true and chaste love, gratitude, etc., each followed by a shepherd's motto and emblem, as in Spenser; three Pastoral Elegies; "Sword and Buckler or the Serving-man's Defence," being a poetical description of servants' duties and hardships. On pastoral literature, see W. W. Greg, "Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama," London, 1906, 8vo, cf. above, vol. II. pp. 469 ff.

² Written about 1614, *e.g.* in "Poems of Raleigh . . . and other courtly Poets," ed. Hannah, 1892, p. 89.

³ Example, sonnets ii (one of the finest), ix, xxvi; "Poems," ed. W. C. Ward, "Muses Library," 1894, 2 vols. Born in 1585, allied to the Stuarts, through Annabella Drummond, wife of Robert III. and mother of the poet-king James I., having studied at Edinburgh and Paris, William Drummond spent most of his life at Hawthornden, seven miles from Edinburgh, among his books and his scientific apparatus, known to the London men of letters, and receiving, in 1618, the visit of Ben Jonson (above, p. 375). He died in 1649, leaving a "History of Scotland," in prose, pr. 1655, and a quantity of unpublished verses. He had given, *e.g.*, "Tears on the Death of Meliades," 1613 (a fine elegy on the death of Prince Henry); "Poems, amorous, funerall, divine, pastorall," 1616; "Flowres of Sion [and the] Cypress Grove," 1623, the latter a prose meditation on death (repr. by Bullen, Stratford-on-Avon, 1907), the former a series of pious poems, part of which had appeared in 1616. Very learned, his works, Jonson told him, "smelling too much of the schooles," he shows, at every turn, evidence of his wide reading: reminiscences of Sidney, Petrarch, Marino, Sannazar, Guarini, Tasso, Ronsard, etc.

beauty fades, the "Muses' heavenly lays" will fall into oblivion; it matters not, "I both must write and love": and it seems as if we heard an evanescent echo of Sidney's song, or Ronsard's or Shakespeare's. Cowley, who was to cipher later, in his exile, the despatches exchanged by Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, a poet by the grace of Spenser, whose "Faerie Queene" he had read when a child, takes his inspiration mainly from the clever madrigalists and amourist writers of Elizabethan times. His memory is filled with their inventions, to the extent that it happens to him to insert in his verses some of the most affected conceits scattered by Sidney in the prose of his "Arcadia."¹ He tries to out-do his models, which is always possible, and was greatly admired in his day:

On a sigh of pity I a year can live,
 One tear will keep me twenty at least,
 Fifty a gentle look will give;
 An hundred years on one kind word I'll feast . . .

¹ The amo'rous waves would fain about her stay,
 But still new amo'rous waves drive them away . . .

"Bathing in the River" (in his collection of poems called "The Mistress"). Same idea in Sidney, bath of Philoclea in the Ladon: "The upper streams make such haste to have their part of imbracing, that the neather (though lothly) must needs give place unto them," book ii. p. 138, ed. of 1633. Abraham Cowley, 1618-67, printed in 1633 his first verses, and on account especially of his series of love poems, "The Mistress," 1647, enjoyed a brilliant but short-lived fame. Some elegies (on the death of W. Harvey, on that of Crashaw) are among his best works. That on the death of Van Dyck is spoilt by the tiresome multiplicity of his pretty inventions. St. Luke welcomes the painter on his arrival in heaven,

Where he beholds new sights divinely fair,
 And could almost wish for his pencil there.

Cowley, who had thought at one time of emigrating ("to retire myself to some of our American plantations," not to seek gold, "but to live there in quiet"; "Poems," 1656, sig. a 3), was to make his mark at the Restoration as an essayist, as a savant, and as the author of a "Vision concerning his late pretended Highness Cromwell the Wicked," 1661. "Complete Works in verse and prose," ed. Grosart, 1881.

It seems, said Samuel Johnson in the following century, as if this lover "had only heard of another sex."¹ And the Doctor dubbed "writers of the metaphysical race"² Cowley and the other versifiers of pretentious nothings, possessed of an agile mind and a cold heart, great misusers of metaphors.

The regular court poets continue the tradition of their elders; they are elegant, superb, and usually extremely licentious. As befits their rank and occupations, they rime mainly occasional pieces, songs, and madrigals. Truly gifted, of graceful manners, they write musical verses composed without effort, or seemingly so. Love and amorous trifles are the main subject of their thoughts. Carew sings of them and Suckling laughs at them: a different way of showing an equal interest. A fly has flown into Carew's "mistriss her eye"; it thought it was flying towards the sun, and has had the fate of Phaeton. Celia, in the most famous of Carew's poems, is invited to Love's garden, described with a liberty unsurpassed by Donne and the Elizabethans, a place of delight where Daphne does not resist Phebus, nor Laura Petrarch—nor Celia Carew.³ Suckling, who lived and wrote as if

¹ "Life of Cowley"; "Works," ed. Murphy, 1806, vol. ix. p. 46.

² An expression which has been sometimes misinterpreted, and which Johnson himself explains thus: "The fault of Cowley, and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphysical race, is that of pursuing his thoughts to the last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality; for of the greatest things the parts are little; what is little can be but pretty, and by claiming dignity becomes ridiculous. Thus all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration; and the force of metaphors is lost, when the mind by the mention of particulars is turned more upon the original than the secondary sense, more upon that from which the illustration is drawn than that to which it is applied."—"Life of Cowley," *ibid.* p. 49.

³ "A Fly that flew into my mistriss her eye."—"A Rapture."—"Poems," ed. Hazlitt, 1870, 4to; "Poems and Masque," ed. Ebsworth, London, 1893. Thomas Carew, "Sewer in ordinary" to the king, secretary of embassy in Italy and France, led a dissolute life and died young about 1639. Much wit and poetical invention in his "Cœlum Britannicum, a masque at Whitehall, in the banqueting house on Shrove-tuesday night, the 18th of febr. 1633. The

the epoch of the Chevalier de Gramont had already begun, jests at women, at their favours, and the deaths one endures for them; his sayings resemble those of inconstant Hylas in d'Urfé's "*Astrée*," which was certainly not unknown to him.¹ The best piece from his ironical pen is his "Session of the Poets," in which Apollo, wishing to bestow the laurel on the worthiest, discards Ben Jonson as too presumptuous, Carew because his works are over-laboured (raillery and antiphrasis probably), and all others, including Suckling himself, and gives the wreath at last to a wealthy alderman, for it is

The best sign
Of good store of wit to have good store of coin.²

This group will survive the impending storms and, without having ever remained silent, having had representatives in the king's camp with Suckling and in the prisons of Parliament with Lovelace, its members will continue to sing and jest, without surpassing the grace of the high-plumed little poems written by the

inventors, Tho. Carew, Inigo Jones." Similitudes have been detected between "The Rapture" and the Golden Age chorus at the end of act i. in Tasso's "*Aminta*" (Spingarn), but the Italian is very far from Carew's indecency.

¹ Si l'on me dédaigne, je laisse
La cruelle avec son dédain (etc.).

Song of Hylas, "*Astrée*," part i., Paris, 1616, vol. i. p. 33.

² Pr. 1637. "Poems, Plays, and other Remains," ed. Hazlitt, 1892, 2 vols. Sir John Suckling, born in 1609, lived a most unexemplary life, took refuge on the Continent during the Civil War, and poisoned himself in Paris (1642?). He wrote a few dramas, in one of which, "*Aglaura*," performed in 1638, Orsames, "a young lord antiplatonique," sings the famous pretty song—

Why so pale and wan, fond lover? (iv. 1.)

Most of his works were printed only after his death: "*Fragmenta Aurea*," 1646, 3rd ed. with "Last Remains," 1658-9. To be classed with this group, the poems of Herbert of Cherbury, left unpublished until 1665.

earlier cavaliers,¹ but carrying beyond all imaginable limits the immorality and licence of their forerunners.

Far from the court, but near it by his sentiments, a man of religion by profession, and a man of the world by inclination, Herrick, the best of these secondary poets, a friend of Jonson and frequenter of literary taverns, is suddenly relegated to the country by the bestowal on him of a vicarage in Devonshire.² He hates living there, so far from London; but, a poet born, he cannot help feeling the charm of the fields, and, feeling it, he expresses it. The verses he devotes to this subject are exquisite ones, simple and sweet as the modulations of the rustic pipe. No eclogue writer has better rendered the pleasantness of country life and country feasts than this man of letters who lived as an exile among peasants, ever regretting the Strand and Cheapside. Wither, and Phineas Fletcher, and Quarles, and even Browne³ and the mass of the poets who tried in his day the rustic *genre*, are by comparison artificial. Herrick is pastoral according to the fashion of the ancients; his work is a blending of realities truly seen by him and of the poetical impressions they have aroused in him. If he had felt nothing,

¹ A model of the kind is the celebrated "To Lucasta going to the Warres," published in 1649 by Lovelace, 1618-58, a brilliant cavalier, wealthy, of good family, who fought for the king and left amorous verses (exceptionally modest for the period), some pastoral poems, madrigals, and songs, the whole of little value, with the exception of the above-mentioned "To Lucasta" and the no less famous short piece, "To Althea from prison," making a total of forty-four lines. "Lucasta, the poems of Richard Lovelace," ed. Hazlitt, London, 1897, pp. 26, 117.

² In 1629; part of his poems were already composed, but the best were written while he was living at Dean Prior. Born in 1591, expelled from his vicarage by the Puritans in 1647, he printed, in 1648, "Hesperides, or the works both humane and divine of Robert Herrick, Esq." Reinstated in his living in 1662, he died there in 1674. "Complete Poems," ed. Grosart, London, 1876, 3 vols. 8vo; "Hesperides and Noble Numbers," ed. Pollard, preface by Swinburne, 1891; "Poetical Works," ed. Saintsbury, 1893, 2 vols.

³ Above, vol. II. p. 471, ff.

he would have said nothing, living as he did, against his will, "on the dull confines of the drooping west," and never ceasing to regret London.¹ He was, with his contemporary Randolph (another tavern haunter and admirer of Ben Jonson, to whom the English country also inspired his best lines²), one of the first to celebrate, after the Renaissance, in truly sincere notes, English peasant life. Herrick has sung, in a number of short pieces, written in metres as varied as those of Ronsard,

. . . of brooks, of blossomes, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July flowers,

" . . . of youth, of Love . . . of dewes, of raines." Their grace was too strong and could not be resisted. He sang of them in a pagan spirit, observing rural manners and games as a new Theocritus, and encouraging himself, as his beloved Horace had done, to enjoy to-day by the fear of to-morrow—"We shall grow old apace and die." Of a radiant immorality and scarcely conscious of it, he publishes, in the same volume, the unedifying poems he collected together under the title of "Hesperides" and which delighted the world of letters, and pious pieces meant to improve the souls of his parishioners.

With this pagan, who wants to be buried under a "turfe," on which Perilla will

Let fall a primrose and with it a teare,

¹ London my home is: though by hard fate sent
Into a long and irksome banishment.

Ode on his return to London when the Puritans expelled him from his vicarage.

² Especially his ode to Anthony Stafford: "Come spur away," and his eclogue, one of the most sincere in the English language, "On the noble assemblies revived on Cotswold Hills by Master Robert Dover" (rustic sports). "Poetical and Dramatic Works," ed. Hazlitt, 1875, 2 vols. 8vo, vol. ii. pp. 578, 621, cf. above, p. 459.

cross or prayers remaining unmentioned, this pagan who jocosely describes a church for insects who possess their Books of Canons, of Articles, and of Homilies, seriousness, when he chooses to be serious, seems artificial. With most of his brother-poets, seriousness is a heartfelt mood, and it is a frequent one; this again is a sign of the times, a knell ringing along the hills in every steeple. The moment is a solemn one, great problems are being discussed, and people begin to perceive the possibility of tragical solutions. The heedless songs of cavalier songsters are really out of season, as are the splendid entertainments given, on the eve of the storm, at the court of the Stuarts. Men of the period who did not know, as we do, how the drama would end, began, however, to suspect it. The proportion of grave, thoughtful, pious works produced by the poets who commenced writing under James I. is quite remarkable, and greatly differs from what had been seen under Elizabeth. The typical cavaliers, a smile on their lips, like Suckling and Carew, are in fact rather rare. Drummond, who, so early as his thirtieth year, had added some "spiritual poems"¹ to his love songs, inclines decidedly to melancholy, and publishes in 1623 his "Flowers of Sion," edifying verses in which the man of to-day lectures the man of yesterday, and his "Cypress Grove," an eloquent meditation on death, in poetical prose. Cowley undertakes a "Davideis, a sacred poem," in twelve cantos, but loses heart after the fourth, for which he has never been blamed.² Habington, a man of the world, offers the novelty of singing nothing but virtuous amours and erecting, in

¹ Thirteen altogether, printed under the title of "Urania," in the volume of "Poems" issued by him in 1616.

² I sing the man who Judah's scepter bore
In that right hand which held the crook before . . .

The "Davideis" was printed in the 1656 ed. of his "Poems."

harmonious and elegant verses, "the self same Altar both to chastity and love"; he adds, besides, to his collection, which had great success, twenty-two religious pieces.¹ Thomas Heywood, who, noticing the success of lascivious poems of the "Venus and Adonis" type, had, as we have seen, transferred them to the stage, now begs pardon for the writings of his younger days, and prints a poem in nine cantos on the "Hierarchie of the blessed Angels, their names, orders, and offices," 1635. The edition is a handsome one, with costly plates; the publisher risks the venture, trusting that there is a wider public now for the holy angels than for the loves of the gods.

Quarles, Herbert, Sandys, Crashaw, all of sincere piety, leave mainly religious poems, meditations in verse on biblical subjects, translations of the Psalms, eclogues in which shepherds discuss theological problems: allegorical and edifying "Emblems," by Quarles, no great artist, but widely read, and in whose works the sombre hues predominate;² pious poems by the kindly Herbert, a

¹ "And though I appeare to strive against the streame of best wits in erecting the self-same Altar, both to chastity and love, I will for once adventure to do well without a president."—Preface to "Castara," 1634. His pious poems are drawn from David, Isaiah, Job, etc., and were added to the ed. of 1640; reprinted by Arber, Westminster, 1895. By the same, a play, "The Queene of Arragon," of small value, performed at court in 1640, some historical works, and a few essays. William Habington, born in 1605, studied at Saint-Omer and Paris, married Lucy Herbert (Castara), daughter of the first Baron Powis, sided with the Republicans during the troubles, and died in 1654.

² Francis Quarles, 1592-1644, secretary of the learned Archbishop of Armagh, Ussher, wrote, *e.g.*, "A Feast for Wormes, set forth in a poeme of the History of Jonah," 1620; "Queene Ester," 1621; "Job Militant," 1624; "Sion Sonets," 1625 (and other paraphrases of the Bible); "Divine Fancies," 1632; "Emblems," 1635 (very popular); "The Shepherd's Oracles delivered in certain Eglogues," 1646, the shepherds bearing such names as Catholicus, Orthodoxus, Anarchus, etc.; "Argalus and Parthenia," a novel in verse, drawn from Sidney's "Arcadia" and written by exception in cavalier style, 1st ed. without a date, but licensed in 1629, 8th 1687. Quarles also wrote

genuine and exclusive champion of "the British Church,"¹ who sings with an ardent sincerity, and some touches of true poetry, its feasts, its Sacraments, the Christian's fear of sin, and also the pavement of the church, its tombs, its stained glass, its music "sweetest of sweets"; works of Sandys, the traveller, translator of the Psalms as well as of Ovid, author of a beautiful and eloquent poem, brief and pregnant, dedicated *Deo Optimo Maximo*, in which he expresses his gratitude to the tutelary Being who has guided him from his birth, has saved him from the perils of the sea, from diseases and Indian treasons, and has allowed him to reach in health and with a quieted mind the evening of life;² heartfelt effusions,

prose manuals of devotion and pamphlets in favour of the Royalist cause. "Complete Works," ed. Grosart, 1880, 3 vols. 4to.

¹ Blessed be God, whose love it was
To double-moat thee with His grace,
And none but thee.

"The British Church," in "The Temple." Brother of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, George Herbert, 1593-1633, led a quiet life devoted to good works, one of those best related by Izaak Walton. Rector of Bemerton, he used to go on foot twice a week to Salisbury to play music with his friends: "And now let's tune our instruments. . . . Religion, he said, does not banish mirth, but only moderates and sets rules to it" (Walton). His principal collection of poems was: "The Temple, sacred poems and private ejaculations," published just after his death and the same year, 1633. There was some difficulty in obtaining the usual licence, on account of the passage:

Religion stands on tip-toe on our land,
Readie to passe to the American strand.

("The Church Militant.")

Principal prose writing: "A Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson, his Character," 1652; much warmth and sincerity in his poetry, much bad taste also, much "false wit," as Addison said (*Spectator*, No. 58). "Complete Works," ed. Grosart; or "The English Works of George Herbert," ed. G. Herbert Palmer, Boston, 1905, 3 vols. (attempt at a chronological arrangement).

² George Sandys, born in 1578, son of the Archbishop of York, began his travels in 1610 and printed with great success an account of them in 1615 (above, vol. II. p. 285 and *infra*, p. 487). Some time a Virginian planter, he

often marred by glaring examples of bad taste, of Crashaw, converted to Catholicism by the sight of Puritanical excesses, and who died young, in 1649, a canon of Loretto, leaving, besides his pious works, remarkable by their warmth and the brilliancy of their hues, some elegant and charming poems on worldly subjects.¹

This is but a small part of the poetical literature inspired then by religion. If certainly not for their value, at least for their number, pious poems of considerable dimensions, supposedly written in the epical or heroical style, deserve attention: "Dooms-Day" of William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, who mingles in

returned to England about 1631 and died in 1644. Simpler and freer from bad taste than most of his contemporaries, he was among the first in his century to handle successfully the heroical couplet without run-on lines. "Poetical Works" (without the translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," 1st printed in 1621-6), ed. Hooper, London, 1872, 2 vols.

¹ Principal collection: "Steps to the Temple, Sacred Poems, with other Delights of the Muses," 1646; ed. Waller, with the Greek and Latin poems, Cambridge, 1904; "Complete Works," ed. Grosart, 1872, 2 vols., and "Supplement" ed. 1888, by the same from MS.; in it the fine madrigal: . . .

At the ivory tribunal of your hand,
Fair one, these tender leaves do trembling stand. . . .

Another beautiful non-religious piece by him is his "Wishes to his supposed Mistress" (above, p. 176). Some admirable lines in his best pious poem, "The Flaming Heart," allow, for one instant, the reader of Crashaw to think of Shelley. His Latin poems are spoilt, like the others, by bad taste of the most execrable sort. When the massacre of the Innocents took place,

Si pueros quisquis vidit, dubitavit an illos
Lilia cœlorum diceret anne rosas—

on account of their mother's milk mixed with the blood of their own wounds. "Epigrammata Sacra," xci.

To the same group belongs W. Strode, 1600-45, recently rescued from obscurity by Mr. Bertram Dobell. A favourite in his day with the makers of anthologies, manuscript or otherwise, Strode fell afterwards into complete oblivion. In spite of his listening, even in his elegies and his other serious pieces, to the dictates of his wit and not simply of his heart, these are his best works. "Poetical Works . . . with the Floating Island, a tragic-comedy" (a play of no value), ed. Dobell, London, 1907.

queerest fashion mythology and the Bible, showing how, when the final destruction comes, the "golden haire" of sirens take fire and the Tritons, "in the deeps are boild";¹ story of the fall and redemption of man, by the honest country rector, Joseph Fletcher, who offers us an early and clumsy sketch of a "Paradise Lost" and a "Paradise Regained";² one more epic on David, attempted by Thomas Fuller,³ who will count mainly as a prose writer, and in spite of his occasional euphuism ("I know there be white teeth in the blackest Black-moore, and a black bill in the whitest swanne. Worst men have something to be commended, best men something in them to be condemned"⁴), belongs to the following period;

¹ "Dooms-Day," 3rd Hour, stanza 94; the work is divided into twelve hours or cantos, and written in stanzas *a b a b a b c c*; 1st part 1614; the whole work (ten or twelve thousand lines), in "Recreations with the Muses," London, 1637, fol. By the same, an unfinished "Jonathan, an heroicke poeme intended," also in the "Recreations";

Muse, sound true valour, all perfections parts . . .

Born ab. 1567, related to the Stuarts and the Lords of the Isles, Sir William Alexander, later Earl of Stirling, Viscount Canada, etc., wrote amorous sonnets and "monarchicke tragedies" (above, p. 30 and II. p. 398). He received in 1621 a charter granting him Canada, became Secretary of State for Scotland in 1626, and died insolvent in 1640. He wrote a conclusion for Sidney's "Arcadia" and revised James I.'s version of the Psalms. On Du Bartas and him, see Upham, "French Influence in English Lit.," p. 205.

² "The Historie of the perfect—cursed—blessed Man," London, 1629, by Joseph Fletcher, 1582?–1637; "Poems," ed. Grosart, 1869; same subject, not genius, as Milton:

Whenas by cursèd disobedience,
Man first did fall from perfect innocence,
He purchased to himselfe and his whole race
The gain of endless pain, the loss of grace. . . . (Fletcher.)

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe . . .
Sing, Heavenly Muse. . . . (Milton.)

³ Born 1608, d. 1661. "David's hainous Sinne," 1631, in "Poems and Translations," ed. Grosart, Edinburgh. 1868.

⁴ "The Church History of Britain," London, 1655, fol. p. 25.

lyrical poem of Wither on virtue, the "Mistress of Philarete," pious epics by the two brothers, Giles and Phineas Fletcher.

With these two last especially, the Spenserian heredity is quite conspicuous; to their master they owe the wealth and variety of their colours (unluckily put sometimes at the wrong place), a stanza resembling his,¹ the use of allegory, their personifyings of virtues and vices, their moral aims and worldly means. Spenser's ways and Milton's ideal are found strangely combined in their works: a *Dies Iræ*, a *De Profundis* sung to an accompaniment of boudoir music, fitting only too well this period of elegant frivolity and of awe-inspiring rumours, harbingers of imminent cataclysms.

As affected in his inventions as was the designer of the map of the "Tendre" country, his style heavily braided with images, his plot thick studded with pastoral and mythological anecdotes and comparisons, Phineas Fletcher describes, in the twelve cantos of his "Purple Island," the rivers, valleys and mountains of that great isle of the realm of God, the human body. He goes back, according to the taste of the day, to Chaos and to the time when light was first separated from darkness; he then treats of Paradise, the serpent, etc. His allegory is not always very clear; he has it purposely so, to keep his reader busy; but, quite Spenserian in this too, he fears, at times, that the reader may be at a loss to understand and will get angry; he therefore adds explanations, and is his own "E. K." This island,

. . . grounded lies upon a sure foundation,
Compact and hard; whose matter—cold and drie—
To marble turns in strongest congelation . . .

¹ Phineas Fletcher's stanza: *a b a b c c c c*; Giles's, *a b a b b c c c c*; Spenser's, *a b a b b c b c c c*; the last line is of six feet, the others of five, in the three cases.

Author's note: "The foundation of the body is the bones."

Upon this base a curious work is rais'd.

Author's note: "Upon the bones as the foundation, is built the flesh." Predecessors are duly lauded, especially Du Bartas and "our Colin," Spenser, whom

all the Graces
And all the Muses nurst; whose well-taught song
Parnassus' self, and Glorian embraces.¹

Phineas's brother, who, like him, claims as his models "thrice-honoured Bartas, and our (I know no other name more glorious than his own) Mr. Edmund Spenser, two blessed soules,"² attempts, in his turn, to give the

¹ Glorian, that is Elizabeth. "The Purple Island, or the Isle of Man, together with piscatorie eglogs . . ." Cambridge, 1633, 4to. Example of episode derived from the ancients: the story of Orpheus very well told in canto v. The allegory, as if to make it more unreal, is given a pastoral frame; Thirsil, a learned shepherd, is supposed to teach his unread brethren, takes some rest after each canto, and, "refresht with the soft-breathing aire," proceeds with renewed vigour. At the end, he is accompanied home with music by all the shepherds,

And lord of all the yeare and their may-sportings crown'd.

On Phineas Fletcher's pastoral works proper, see above, vol. II. p. 472. By the same, a poem on religious questions: "Locustæ vel Pietas Jesuitica"—"The Locustes or Appolyonists," Cambridge, 1627, first part in Latin, second in English; a virulently anti-Catholic work; the first lines will give an idea of its tone:

Of men, nay Beasts: worse, monsters; worst of all,
Incarnate Fiends, English Italianat;
Of Priests, O no! Mass-Priests, Priests-cannibal . . .

"something I faine would tell." "Works," ed. Grosart, 1869, 4 vols. Phineas Fletcher, 1582-1650, rector of Hilgay, Norfolk, and Giles Fletcher, 1585?-1623, rector of Alderton, Suffolk, were the sons of the Giles Fletcher (above, vol. II. p. 285) who had written on Russia, and first cousins to John Fletcher, the dramatist; no relationship with Joseph Fletcher the pious poet.

² Preface of "Christs Victorie and Triumph in Heaven, and Earth, over and after Death," Cambridge, 1610. "Complete Poems," ed. Grosart, London, 1876, 8vo.

nation the "Paradise Regained" it was henceforth expecting. The poem is called "Christ's Victorie," and has for its subject "our Redemption." A true poet, of sincere piety, Giles Fletcher spoils his work by his conceits, his antitheses,¹ his pretentious comparisons,² and above all by his constant mixing of antagonistic elements. Let us remember Spenser's manner, his artificial morality, his indecencies and sermons, both meant for an elegant public of worldlings, and it will be easily understood that no one can successfully apply such a style to the problem of Redemption and to the drama on Golgotha.³ When Fletcher describes, after Spenser and Tasso, and in the same manner, the "Bowre of Vaine Delight" and the fountain where Pangloretta bathes, when he stretches on "beds of roses" "ladies naked," whiter than the ivory walls of their chamber, sings love-songs imitated from those of his predecessors—and exposes to such low temptations the Redeemer of the world, the very un-

¹ . . . How the Infinite farre greater grewe
By growing lesse . . .
How worthily He died, that died unworthily (p. 125).

² How oft have I seene the waving pine
Tost on a watrie mountaine, knocke his head
At heaven's too patient gates, and with salt brine
Quench the moone's burning hornes (p. 137).

Some attention is needed to recognise that a ship is meant.

³ So Philomel, perch't on an aspin sprig,
Weeps all the night her lost virginie,
And sings her sad tale to the merrie twig,
That daunces at such joyfull miserie,
Ne ever lets sweet rest invade her eye;
But leaning on a thorne her daintie chest,
For feare soft sleepe should steale into her brest,
Expresses in her song greefe not to be exprest.

This comparison is applied to the Virgin in tears at the death of Christ!
(Part iii. stanza 66.)

believer is abashed, and wonders what blasphemy could be more repulsive than the effusions of this well-intentioned hymnist.¹

The same causes, the same attempt to combine antagonistic elements, produce the same results in the works of Wither. This brilliant, noisy and cumbersome personage, born under Elizabeth and who died under Charles II., sour, exacting, ever quarrelling, ever begging, often imprisoned, very gifted withal, unites in remarkable poems the various characteristics of the dissimilar periods which his longevity allowed him to live through. Incredibly prolific, he still awaits, like Lydgate, a complete edition. Shortly before his death, he drew up a list of his writings and named eighty-six of them: his list is too short by about twenty.² He is a sensuous amourist and an edifying puritan at the same time. Author of satires, of pastorals, of a psychological monologue to be compared with the epistles and complaints of Daniel and Drayton,³ of a series of ejaculations and prayers for all circumstances of life, including a setting forth "to settle in Virginia, New England, or like places,"⁴ he is especially himself in his

¹ The "Bowre of Vaine Delight" and the palace of Pangloretta or Panglorie are described in part ii. stanzas 45 ff.; Spenser and his "Bower of Blis," Tasso and his "Fortunate Island," are closely imitated; same temptations, same "charmed beasts" who are men transformed, same love song and same final destruction by the representative of virtue.

² Sidney Lee's calculation in the "Dictionary of National Biography." George Wither, 1588-1667, sided first with the king then with Parliament, published, *e.g.*, "Wither's Motto," 1621, "Fair Virtue, the Mistress of Phil'arete," 1622, but written, says the preface, "many yeares ago" (in Arber's "English Garner," vol. iv.; cf. Chapman, "A Coronet for his mistress Philosophy," 1595, and de Pontoux, "L'Idée," 1579: "S'on dit que j'ayme une beauté mortelle," etc., sonnet xiv), "Hallelujah," 1641, ed. Farr, 1857. "Poetry of G. Wither," ed. Sidgwick, "Muses' Library," 1902, 2 vols. On his satires and eclogues, above, vol. II. pp. 436 and 472.

³ "An elegiac Epistle of Fidelia to her inconstant friend," 1615; in Arber, "English Garner," vi. 167.

⁴ "A hymn when we are washing," "when we enjoy the benefit of the fire," "when we ride for pleasure," etc. When "kindred meet," they are

paradoxical "Mistress of Philarete." He explains in a preface his system, which is that of the Salvation Army: to turn to account, in favour of virtue, man's inclination to frivolity; but the system is put in practice by Wither in a less chastened way than it is now: "And here is described," our poet explains, "that loveliness of [women] which is the principal object of wanton affection, to no worse end, but that those who would never have looked on this poem," if virtue had been plainly represented there, "might, where they expected the satisfaction of their sensuality only," improve their souls. Wither is true to his word, rather too true, and his readers will not receive less than they had been led to expect. The love songs (some of great literary value) scattered through his poem are so numerous and fit so well any kind of love that they have often been separated from the rest and included in anthologies as amorous poems proper.¹ He speaks wisdom too, from time to time, and even does so in such reasonable fashion that we seem to be listening again to our old friend omniscient Genius of the "Confessio Amantis."² But Wither shortens such discourses and returns with alacrity to less austere subjects. Wanton descriptions abound with him; no amourist outdid him. Titian at least gives a dress to his sacred Love; Wither

invited to celebrate the occasion, to the tune of the 133rd Psalm, by no less original remarks than these:

How happy is it and how sweet,
When kindred kind appear,
And when in unity we meet,
As we obliged are.

("Hallelujah," ed. Farr, p. 50.)

¹ Especially the song, justly famous—

Shall I, wasting in despaire . . .

("English Garner," iv. p. 454.)

² First that part shall be disclosed

That's of Elements composed (etc., *ibid.* p. 387).

gives one also to his Virtue, but only to crumple it, tear it, and lastly remove it in a scene worthy of Ariosto.

The supply of religious poems, edifying or meant to edify, was, at this date, truly wonderful. Many others might be mentioned: by unknown authors like "Christes bloodie Sweat,"¹ or lost ones like the "Crown of Thorn" by Sir John Beaumont, brother of the dramatist, and even philosophical poems written a little later and belonging more properly to the following period: by the Platonist Henry More, who forswears "ladies' loves" and "knights' brave martiall deeds" according to the Spenserian pattern and treats "of the Soul,"² or by Joseph Beaumont, thirty thousand lines also on the soul, yet it is only an abbreviated form of a composition which would have needed the untiring energy of those readers whom the Middle Ages had provided for the "Romaunt of the Rose" or the "Pilgrimage of Human Life."

The merit of some of these poems, the lyrical warmth of Wither, the fine rural scenes and the mythological legends inserted by Phineas Fletcher in his work, the adoption, by several authors of this period, of a sober mode of versifying, in reaction against the practice of the

¹ "Christes bloodie Sweat, or the Sonne of God in His Agonie," London, 1613, one more attempt at a "Paradise Regained," written in stanzas *ababcc*, reprinted by Grosart in his "Poems of Joseph Fletcher," 1869, and attributed by him to this author on quite insufficient grounds. The dedication is signed "I. F." but the style, and the information on himself, supplied by the author point to a man very different from the rector of Wilby, and of much more merit.

² "A Platonick Song of the Soul," 1647, divided into several cantos: "Psychozoia," "Democritus Platonissans," "Antipsychopannychia," etc., each being preceded by a summary, according to the Spenserian model—

This song great Psyches parentage,
With her fourefold array,
And that mysterious marriage,
To th' reader doth display.

("Complete Poems," ed. Grosart, 1878, 4to.)

romantics, and which will lead by degrees, through Sandys and Denham, to the rimed couplet without run-on lines of Waller, Dryden and Pope,¹ are not that for which these authors mostly count. What is most noticeable in them is, as we have said, their number. Although they claim Spenser as their master, they show, by their numerous adaptations of his style to pious subjects, that the time was no longer favourable to new "Faerie Queenes," and that the nation was ready for a far more serious epic, far grander and deeper: what it wanted was a "Paradise Lost." It expected it, and longed for it; and while twenty writers of but modest parts were trying to realise its wish, the great man who was to do so, very nearly went astray, and, full of admiration as he was for the famous artists of the foregoing age, ardent admirer of Spenser, as most of his immediate predecessors had been, he all but gave his country one more Arthurian poem instead of the biblical epic so earnestly desired. The voice of the nation luckily, those unspoken suggestions which, at certain periods, are, so to say, in the air, and which had been heard by many an artist deprived of genius, turned the scale, and Milton fulfilled his destiny. By the side of his work, those of his predecessors, all of which he knew and from most of which he borrowed, seem dead. Let us note, however, that they did exist; if the majority have died, their corpses serve at least to show the direction: they line the road, as skeletons do along the path followed by caravans on their way to the holy sanctuaries.

¹ This couplet, destined to prevail again later, was recovering the favour it had lost during Elizabeth's reign. Examples can be found in a number of poets of James and Charles I.'s time, in Wither, for instance, in his "Fidelia," 1615, in Drummond, "Poems," vol. i. pp. 32, 124 ("Songs," i and ii), 1616, etc.

II.

Their eyes raised towards distant horizons, gazing at an unreachable sky, or else turned toward fathomless abysses, Elizabethan poets and thinkers had, many of them, lived much in the land of dreams, beyond the limits of realities. But now the earth was quaking, and it was impossible not to think of earth. Eyes look down towards it; men do not try so persistently to reach the stars; hands wander among the leaves and branches to cull the fruits of the orchard. The period is eminently a period of observers; the sciences and arts of observation progress; in the case even of certain kinds which will bloom only later, such as the novel, the elements of their future grandeur are being assembled now with more care and better effect than ever before.

The essay, the portraits, the "characters," the psychological analysis of one's neighbour and of one's self, the works of moralists closely studying the human mind and the means of forming it, get a wider and readier public. Even a poem like Phineas Fletcher's "Purple Island" is connected, in a friendly preface by Daniel Featley, with that more and more popular class of writings: "He that would learn Theologie, must first studie Autologie" (1633). Ascham and Sir Thomas Elyot now have numerous continuators, like Peacham, who excuses himself for writing after them, and who, desirous in his turn that his "Compleat Gentleman" be worthy of the name, gives a considerable place in his work to literature and art, supplying a summary of English literary history, praising Giotto, especially for his frescoes at Assisi, Raphael whose "stately hangings of arras, containing the story of St. Paul out of the Acts," used to adorn "the banquetting house at White-hall," and the French

as being "the best architects in the world."¹ Wotton, the ambassador, now provost of Eton, sums up likewise his personal observations on the forming of the human mind, in his "Philosophical Survey of Education";² Brathwaite publishes in 1630 his "English Gentleman," and in 1631, his "English Gentlewoman" (both of little value); after King James, who had printed in 1599 his "Basilicon Doron," or "Instructions to his dearest sonne,"³ Raleigh drafts his "Instructions to his Son and to Posterity," giving as plain and practical advice as he can, this one for example: "Have therefore ever more care that thou be beloved of thy wife, rather than thyself besotted on her."⁴

People like to control and verify; they note the movements of their heart and mind; they describe their neighbours' manners. The great quarrel on the usefulness of travels is still going on; Hall declares

¹ "The Compleat Gentleman, fashioning him absolute in the most necessary and commendable qualities concerning minde and bodie," London, 1622, 4to, 2nd ed. enlarged 1634; modern ed. by G. S. Gordon, Oxford, 1906; great use made of C. Mander for all that concerns art. Henry Peacham (1576-1643?) left several other works, e.g. "The Worth of a Penny," 164[1], in Arber, "English Garner," vi. 245, of less interest.

² "Or Moral Architecture," in "Reliquiæ Wottonianæ," London, 1651, much being made of experimental observation, and the popularity of the word "characters" being adverted to: first of all, says Wotton, a study must be made of "certain signatures of hopefulness or *characters* (as I will rather call them, because that word hath gotten already some entertainment among us), whereby may be timely described what the child will prove in probability." The least detail should be observed: "not only their articulate answers, but likewise certain smiles and frowns upon incident occasions." Concerning Wotton (1568-1639), one of the men of that period who knew Europe best, who spent some twenty years in Venice and died provost of Eton, see Izaak Walton's famous biography, and "Life and Letters of Sir H. Wotton," by L. Pearsall Smith, Oxford, 1907, 2 vols. 8vo.

³ One of the earliest works translated from English into French: "Basilicon Doron ou présent royal de Jacques premier roy d'Angleterre . . . au Prince Henry son fils . . . traduit de l'Anglois" by de Villiers Hotman, Paris, 1603, "Avec Permission."

⁴ "Works," vol. viii. pp. 557 ff.

against them, Howell for them ;¹ the accounts of journeys compiled after the return home, with the help of notes and sometimes drawings from nature,² collected on the spot, multiply from year to year.

The good sense and veracity of Sandys, the minute observation of picturesque details and the realism of Coryat, are, as we have seen, the main merits of their relations of travels, written under James. The psychological and moral essay is, quite naturally, combined with this kind of work: Fynes Moryson, who had travelled under Elizabeth, publishes during the next reign his "Itinerary . . . containing his ten yeeres travell"; besides the Itinerary proper, full of statistical data and studded with useful and quaint information, he prints noteworthy considerations on the character of European peoples and gives sound advice to the 'prentice traveller, this for example: "Let him lay his purse under his pillow, but alwayes foulded with his

¹ "Quo Vadis, a Just Censure of Travel," 1617, by Joseph Hall, whose reasonings are those of a "laudator Patriæ": since his compatriots are better than any other sort of men, they cannot but lose by travelling.—"Instructions for Forreine Travell," 1642 (reprinted by Arber, 1895), by James Howell, 1594?–1666, a traveller and diplomat, who began his journeys in 1618 and left letters, various treatises, a revised edition of the great "French-English Dictionary" of Cotgrave, London, 1650, fol. (originally published in 1611, and having first figured in the Stationers' Registers as "A Dictionarie in Ffrenche and Englishe collected by C. Holyband and sythene augmented or altered by Randall Cotgrave," June 7, 1608), much in his preface being borrowed from Pasquier's "Recherches de la France"; a prose allegory, of a kind greatly in fashion then: "Dodona's Grove," 1640, fol. (French version, 1641), etc. A number of his letters are in reality essays and treatises and not real letters; several describe, from personal observation, foreign countries, as does the long one, given as sent from Antwerp, May 1, 1622, and entitled "A Survey of the Seventeen Provinces." "The Familiar Letters of James Howell," ed. J. Jacobs, London, 1892, 2 vols. 8vo, vol. i. p. 115.

² For example, in Sandys: "A Relation of a Journey begun A.D. 1610," London, 1615, fol.; plates visibly engraved from an amateur's sketches and to which the author refers in his text: ". . . As appeareth by the following picture" (alluding to the entrance to the Pyramids).

garters or something hee first useth in the morning, lest hee forget to put it up before hee goe out of his chamber." Travels, Moryson thinks, improve the mind; the impossible, however, should not be expected from them: "*Chi asino va a Roma, asino se ne torna.*" French commerce suffers from the lack of coal; this commodity is imported from England, as France has "no pit coales or sea coales." But she has all the rest, so much so that, wanting nothing, and her people being contented within their borders, her colonies are insufficiently cared for and do not prosper.¹

His "Itinerary" is scarcely finished than he sets to work again and tries to depict, on a larger scale, the character of the various nations he has visited, including his own. He describes England as the merry country which he had known in his youth and which had not yet been modified by the approach of the great upheaval; no land more joyous, none fuller of plays, players and jollity. "All cittyes, towns and villages swarme with companyes of players with their peculiar theaters capable of many thousands, wherein they all play every day in the weeke but Sunday, with the most strang concourse of people. . . . As there be in my opinion more playes in London then in alle the partes of the worlde I have seene, so doe these players or comedians excell all other in the worlde. . . . What shall I say of daunsing with curious and rurall musicke, frequently used by the better sort, and upon all hollydayes by country people daunsing about the may-poles with bagpipes or other fidlers, besydes the jollityes of certain seasons of the yeare?" Especially attentive to

¹ In Moryson's "Itinerary" (London, 1617, fol., some very bad maps of towns; repr. Glasgow, 1907, 4 vols.), the third part consists in essays inspired by his travels, his observations, and his experience. Born in 1566, and belonging to a well-to-do family, he began his journeys in May, 1591, visited most countries in Europe, became secretary to the Lord Deputy in Ireland, and died in February, 1630.

externals, Moryson has much less to say about literature ; he mentions English poetry, but only to state that his compatriots, being "by nature amorous," have "followed" this "pleasant study" in greater numbers than in any other nation, "and therein have, in good measure, attained excellency."¹

The "Observations in his Travels" of the unfortunate Sir Thomas Overbury are essays on nations, and remarkable ones, rather than a relation of incidents or a description of the sights seen by him.² He is attentive, well-informed, and of sound judgment. Owing to his gift of observation and his knowledge of the present, he is able to foresee the future. His description of France, the France of Henri IV., "flourishing with peace," is full of quasi-prophetic statements. He detects admirably the causes of the force and of the weakness of that country. An absolute monarch governs it whom

¹ "Shakespeare's Europe, unpublished chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary," ed. Ch. Hughes, London, 1903, p. 477 (cf. above, p. 80), apparently written in 1617-20, licensed in 1626 and left in MS. (preserved at Corpus Christi College, Oxford). Among others of the same class, see Dallington's "Survey of Tuscany . . . 1596," pr. 1605, and "Survey of France . . . 1598," pr. 1606 (above, II. p. 293); Sir Thomas Herbert, "A Relation of Some Yeares Travaille, begunne Anno 1626, into Afrique and the Greater Asia," London, 1634, fol., translated into French, 1663; Heylyn's "France painted to the Life," caricaturing rather than portraying the France of 1625; comical journeys of John Taylor, the water poet: "Three Weekes . . . to Hamburg," 1617 (he sees an executioner so big that "Gogmagog or our English Sir John Falstaff were but shrimps" in comparison), and "The Pennyles Pilgrimage," 1618 (verse and prose; among a quantity of ridiculous jests and incessant raileries against poor Coryat, some useful information: working by candlelight of the subterranean "admirable coal mines" of Sir George Bruce), and the famous farcical English journey of Brathwaite, "Barnabæ Itinerarium," 1638. On Elizabethan travellers, see above, vol. II. pp. 280 ff., 286 ff.; on Ascham in Germany, II. p. 106.

² "Sir Thomas Overbury, his Observations in his Travels . . . A.D. 1609," 1st ed. 1626, repr. by Arber, "English Garner." Overbury, 1581-1613, died, as is well known, poisoned, in the Tower, a victim of the hatred of Frances Howard, the divorced wife of the Earl of Essex.

no Parliament can constrain and who, on the contrary, can subdue his Parliament. As for the States General, they have been practically suppressed and have become as rare as an œcumenical council. The Hundred Years' War has disaccustomed the country to assemblies difficult to call together. Contrary to England, the people stand alone in France, confronting king, clergy, and nobles: "The clergy and the gentry did not run the same fortune with the people there as in England. For most of the taxes falling only upon the people, the clergy and gentry being foreborne (exempted), were easily induced to leave them to the king's mercy." Few historians writing after the French Revolution have better discerned its causes than Overbury, who wrote almost two centuries before. As for the forces of the nation, one of the most notable is that irredentism (he has not the word, but clearly speaks of the thing) is unknown within its borders. Whenever an accretion of territory takes place, annexed people are treated as brethren and forget racial differences; and, what is very cleverly observed, this equality of treatment is in France less the result of laws than of manners.¹ The destruction of France should never be wished for by any Englishman; a proverb says: "The day of the ruin of France is the eve of the ruin of England." As for Germany, "if it were entirely subject to one monarchy [it] would be terrible to all the rest." The energetic brevity of a simple and lively style increases the merit of Overbury's sayings and makes them the more impressive: before Henri IV.'s pacification, "no man but

¹ "Now that which hath made them, at this time, so largely great at home, is their adopting into themselves the lesser adjoining nations, without destruction or leaving upon them any mark of strangeness: as the Bretons, Gascons, Provençals. . . . Towards which union, their nature, which is easy and harbourous to strangers, hath done more than any law could have effected but with long time."—"English Garner," iv. p. 309.

had an enemy within three miles, so the country became frontier all over."

Besides his travelling notes, Overbury left some essays or characters, of all writings the most popular under the first Stuarts. The starting point of this literature was French and had been marked by a masterpiece, Montaigne's "Essays," 1580; it was to count another masterpiece, a century later: La Bruyère's "Caractères," 1688. In the meantime, many landmarks had been planted: such as the "portraits" dear to the *Précieuses*, and those also with which Molière enlivens polite conversations in the salon of *Célimène*; and those essays again, and those portraits, so eloquent in their sublime brevity: Pascal's "Pensées" and La Rochefoucauld's "Maxims." All these writings stand together in close relation; Montaigne mixes characters with his essays and La Bruyère essays with his characters; both scatter maxims and "pensées" through their work. Portraits and moral or psychological considerations come to the same; man is the subject of observation in both cases, with more space allowed to the body in the first, to the soul and to the general interests of the individual in the second. Montaigne, so different from all others, so wayward, but so frank, so quick-sighted, so perfectly sincere, delighted Europe from the first. Pascal himself was afraid he might be taken for a mere copyist of Montaigne: "It is not in Montaigne," he said, "but in myself that I find all I discover there."¹ In England, the Gascon philosopher obtained readers and admirers without number, and of no mean order, as among them figured, without the possibility of a doubt, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Bacon.²

¹ "Pensées," ed. Brunschwicg, ii. 64. Sir Thomas Browne's similar disclaimer is well known; above, p. 175.

² Bacon quotes him; the copy of Florio's translation of Montaigne

Bacon, who quotes Montaigne and borrowed his title from him, gave the earliest and most famous of the English collections of essays in 1597.¹ But he worked at it, like Montaigne, all his life, ever adding and correcting; the first edition contained ten essays, the definitive one, published in 1625, fifty-eight.

It is impossible to less resemble a model than this imitator does; the usual rôles are here inverted: the Frenchman it is who proves lawless, adventurous, picturesque, while the Englishman remains logical, well-balanced, classical. Bacon speaks as a conscientious and thoughtful adviser; he gives himself themes to develop, and he develops them with care: considerations on religion and politics, on the government of families and empires, on sentiments and passions, with some subjects of lesser import, but treated, they too, in all seriousness—the reverence due to rules being never forgotten: rules for the performance of a masque, the designing of a garden, the building of a house. Classical to the core, Bacon arranges his garden French-wise, with straight alleys, fountains, "stately and arched hedges," duly provided with birds. Hedges will be cut in geometrical figures, and birds will be shut in cages concealed among the leaves: no liberty for either hedges

("Essayes," 1603, fol.), and which has belonged to Ben Jonson, is in the British Museum; on Shakespeare and Montaigne, above, p. 169.; cf. Upham, "French Influence in English Literature," New York, 1908, ch. vi.

¹ "Essayes. Religious Meditations. Places of perswasion and disswasion," London, 1597 (the two last sections are separate works; the Meditations are in Latin, the rest in English). Eight English editions of the "Essays," two Italian translations, and two French ones (the earliest by Baudoin, 1611) were published in Bacon's lifetime. Definitive edition given by him shortly before his death: "Essayes or counsels, civill and morall," 1625. Text in "Works," ed. Spedding (and others), vol. vi. Parallel texts in Arber, "A Harmony of the Essays," Westminster, 1895; ed. with notes by Miss M. Augusta Scott, New York, 1908. Cf. Thomas Howell's "Devises," 1581 (ed. W. Raleigh, Oxford, 1906), which, though written in verse, are most of them rather moral essays than real poems, treating of "Flattery the vayle of Frawde," "Ruine the rewarde of Vice," Concord, Impiety, etc.

or birds; rule must predominate. Let Bernard Palissy, with all his statues, fountains, and enamels, prove a better friend of nature and of birds if it so pleases him;¹ let ambassador Wotton, well known to Bacon, celebrate, if such be his taste, those gardens which are "irregular, or at least cast into a very wild regularity," and which were to be introduced later in France under the name of "*jardins à l'anglaise*";² Bacon will do nothing of the sort. A logician, he divides and subdivides; he revels in enumerations; fearing to omit anything, and wishing to avoid any chance of blame, he takes such excellent and such numerous precautions that he turns out to be, in the end, too well protected and fortified; we lose our interest in such a very prudent author. Let us not quarrel with him on what he has to say on the advantages of dissimulation, which are of three kinds—and not of four—and on its disadvantages, which just happen to be of three kinds also, and not of two nor of four; no well-intentioned reader will cavil. But what can be thought of a list in fifteen lines of the "things to be seen and observed" by travellers, to which should be added, our author is careful to state, "whatsoever is memorable in the places where they go"?

¹ Birds will be attracted, but not forced in: "Et afin de rendre ledit cabinet plus plaisant, je feray planter sur la voste d'iceluy plusieurs arbrisseaux portans fruits, bons pour la nourriture des oiseaux, et aussi certaines herbes desquelles ils sont amateurs de la graine, à fin d'accoutumer lesdits oiseaux à se venir reposer et dire leurs chansonnettes sur lesdits arbrisseaux pour donner plaisir à ceux qui seront au dedans dudit cabinet et jardin."—"Recepte véritable. . . . Item en ce livre est contenu le dessein d'un jardin autant délectable et d'utile invention qu'il en fut oncques veu . . . par Maistre Bernard Palissy, ouvrier de terre et inventeur des rustiques figulines du Roy," La Rochelle, 1563, 8vo.

² "*Elements of Architecture*," 1624. Bacon's essay "*Of Gardens*" was added by him, in his edition of 1625. Ronsard, in whose soul much romanticism remained, had had the same taste as Wotton:

J'aime fort les jardins qui sentent le sauvage.

Bacon's merits are his logic and his dignity, the wisdom of his judgments, the conscious art of his style. Montaigne's charm comes from his mind, ever awake, ever ready, from the happy picturesqueness of his speech, and the meanderings of his thought, which, at every turn, throws out unexpected lights. Bacon starts when he should and stops when his reason has decided that it is better to cease speaking; he is magnificent to look at and listen to. With the Gascon, reason is never absent either, but his is a Gascon reason, which the "*folle du logis*" leads by the hand; both reason and imagination are on very good terms and deem that, according to the Italian proverb, "A fool and a sage know more than a sage alone." Without being more familiar with the ancients nor quoting them oftener, Bacon is more formal, he has more starch on his ruff, he approaches nearer to pedantry; the interest of his remarks is less human, too, and less general, because of his usual adherence to the aristocratic point of view; if he speaks of travels, he has in mind young gentlemen escorted by their tutors and having access to embassies; his gardens are "princelike," the houses he describes are palaces. In both writers traits of truest wisdom abound, coined like aphorisms by Bacon,¹ slipped by Montaigne into some corner of his sentences where they will perchance remain unperceived; but this is one of the peculiarities of his genius and one of the results of his system: unobserved on the moment, these traits stay, as if dormant, in a nook of the memory, to quicken at the proper hour, when their virtue can be of service.

Bacon's little book was greatly admired; he soon had

¹ "There is no secrecy comparable to celerity."—"There is a superstition in avoiding superstition."—"Children sweeten labours, but they make misfortunes more bitter; they increase the cares of life, but they mitigate the remembrance of death."

many imitators: essays or characters of Cornwallis,¹ Vaughan,² Hall, Overbury, Nicholas Breton,³ John Taylor,⁴ Owen Feltham, Earle, without speaking of the pious George Herbert's "Country Parson," which is only a "character" on a larger scale than usual,⁵ or of Ben Jonson's descriptions of the personages in some of his comedies, or of his "Timber or Discoveries," which are in reality short essays,

¹ "Essayes by Sir William Corne-waleys the younger, Kt.," London, 1600; "A second part of Essayes. Written by Sir William Cornwallis," London, 1601; printed with the usual excuse: "The author . . . hateth nothing more then comming in publick," but he is afraid of pirates; other ed. 1610, 1631-2. In this collection, of slight value, Cornwallis treats of Resolution, Patience, Suspition, Love, etc. He extolls the "Lord de Montaigne," who "hath made morall Philosophy speak couragiously," and "hath put Pedanticall schollerisme out of countenance" (sig. H. 4); he bestows great attention on his own self, which unluckily does not prove so interesting as that of Montaigne. By the same, "Discourses upon Seneca the Tragedian," 1601, common-place disquisitions on moral subjects.

² "The Golden Grove, moralized . . . very necessary for all such as would know how to governe themselves, their houses or their countrey," 1600, 2nd ed. 1608, by W. Vaughan (for a time a colonist in Newfoundland, b. 1577, d. 1641), being mostly essays, treating of temperance, anger, friendship, "gynecracie," of the education of gentlemen, of vice, of stage plays and their immorality, etc.

³ By Breton, "Characters upon Essaies, morall and divine," 1615, dedicated to Bacon, on knowledge, patience, love, peace, war, etc.; "The Good and Badde," 1616, a series of portraits, a good man, an atheist (described as being necessarily drunk), a usurer, a parasite, etc. Other essays by the same in "Fantasticks serving for a Perpetual Prognostication," 1626; some dialogues on travels, on court and country, etc. "Works" in verse and prose, ed. Grosart, 1879, 2 vols. 8vo; above, vol. II. pp. 398, 470.

⁴ The prose "Armado or Navye of 103 Ships," 1627, of John Taylor, the "water poet" (*i.e.*, boatman), is, under an allegorical form, a series of something like characters, his ships being called "Lord-ship," "Scholar-ship," "Lady-ship," etc. Each of Brathwaite's twelve satires, "Natures Embassie or the wilde-mans Measures," 1621 (above, vol. II. p. 436), is preceded by an argument in prose, consisting of a kind of character or essay; reprinted, Boston, Lincolnshire, 1877, 8vo; by him also, "Whimzies or a new cast of Characters," 1631.

⁵ "A Priest to the Temple, or the Countrey Parson, his Character and rule of holy Life," the word *character* being printed in very large letters to draw attention and secure readers; finished 1632, published posthumously, 1652; various chapters on the parson praying, arguing, punishing, the parson in mirth, etc.

pregnant with wisdom, fraught with sense, often reproducing, as we have seen, other men's opinions, but opinions that Jonson approved of and made his, always expressed in masterly English prose. The popularity of Montaigne, become generally accessible through Florio's translation in 1603, the fondness for the "humours" put on the stage by Jonson, the success of portraits in verse or prose, of satires¹ and sketches of everyday life, the increasing attention paid to verifiable truths, were so many encouragements for writers to try their chance as essayists. Lists of them, of incredible length, have been drawn up.² Several know how to set an individual on his feet, to make him move and talk, and they can show what is or what is not in his heart and in his soul. They do not yet write novels of real life, but they act as purveyors; they supply the matter and the *personnel*. Their portraits are unconnected, but often very minute, physically and morally. To draw such, to show that it was possible to interest readers without mixing the impossible and the real, was to resume the early experiments tried by the Greenes and the Nashes of the former generation, and make it easier for their successors to surpass them.

Joseph Hall, the satirist and future bishop, describes not a few abstract types, but he has also real live men of the kind to be admitted, ready made, into the novels of a later date, with their ways of speaking, of moving or standing, their gait, attitudes and gestures; for he

¹ Some among the satirists themselves court such an assimilation. Wither entitles his satires: "Abuses stript and whipt or satirical Essayes," 1613. "Tell-Trothes" . . . "Passionate Morrice," by "A.," issued as early as 1593, can be considered as a collection of portraits: series of prose pictures where are shown, dancing together, "a passionate ass and a peevish wench," "a lusty widower and a gallant wench," etc.; ed. Furnivall, New Shakspeare Society, 1876.

² Researches of Dr. Bliss; Arber, Introduction to Earle's "Micro-Cosmographie," 1868.

forgets nothing.¹ We shall meet again, in the course of time, his Vain-Glorious, who "wears all his land on his back, and walking high, looks over his left shoulder to see if the point of his rapier follows him with a grace," his Busy-Body, and many others. Busy-Body's "estate is too narrow for his mind, and therefore he is fain to make himself room in others' affairs. . . . No news can stir but by his door. . . . What every man ventures in a Guiana voyage, and what they gain'd he knows to a hair. . . . [He] calls at his neighbour's window, and asks why his servants are not at work. . . . His tongue, like the tail of Sampson's foxes, carries fire-brands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world on a flame."

Feltham, who ceaselessly fluctuates between paradox and banality, confining himself as much as possible to abstractions, in the hopes apparently of belonging to all times (but who only succeeded in being of none), is among the least valuable of all. There is little profit to glean in hearing him descant with good intention on hope, poverty, "the uncertainty of life," "Time's continual speed," or in examining with him whether woman is inferior to man. He considers that she is not, for she is prettier,

¹ "Characters of Vertues and Vices," 1608, in the numerous editions of his "Works"; translated into French, with great success (by de Tourval?), "Caractères de Vertus et de Vices," 1610. As a moralist and satirist again, Hall wrote his "Mundus Alter et Idem," Frankfort, 1605, in Latin prose, a painful description of imaginary countries as execrable as the island of Utopia was perfect: country of Avarice, Gluttony, Lechery, Folly, etc. Charles Sorel, a connoisseur in such matters, knew Hall's work: "Un certain Anglois," says he, "a fait un livre Latin qu'il appelle *Mundus Alter et Idem*; il veut dire que c'est un nouveau monde semblable à celui-cy. . . . Il y a de grandes cartes géographiques dans le livre, qui se déploient comme si c'estoit pour une contrée véritable décrite sérieusement." Sorel wonders whether the author did not give the first idea of those fancy maps, so numerous since in France; such as the map of the Tendre country or the "carte du Royaume des Précieuses"; but he inclines to conclude that he has not. "Bibliothèque Française," Paris, 1664, 12mo, p. 151.

"And can wee thinke God would put a worser soule into a better body?" From which obviously we ought to conclude that Socrates had a "worser soule" than Phryne.¹

But with Overbury, and also with Earle, we again meet realities. The former's sketches, in spite of too constant a striving after wit, are among the best; even when the original has been painted a hundred times before, the portrait is worth looking at. The "affectate traveller" returns home, and it so happens that "his attire speaks French or Italian, and his gait cries Behold me. . . . He chooseth rather to be counted a spy than not a politician . . . rather to tell lies than not wonders." Overbury's collection does not include only satirical portraits; he has a kindly, jovial, and indulgent "Franklin," a descendant of the one who went on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, an ancestor of Sir Roger de Coverley, a friend to man and beast, who favours all field sports, "and thinks not the bones of the dead any thing bruised, or the worse for it, though the country lasses dance in the church-yard after even-song."² Earle comes even nearer the novel, as he is fond of describing little scenes and the surroundings among which they take place, those by preference which Teniers painted. There is plenty of ale and tobacco in his work, numerous drunkards, scamps, low gallants, and queer creatures

¹ "Resolves, divine, morall, politicall," n.d. but 1618 or 1620, numerous editions (the 8th in 1661, mod. one by O. Smeaton, "Temple Classics"). Owen Feltham, 1602?-68, left also some poems, and "A Brief Character of the Low Countries," 1652 (note the word character), paradoxical, vain attempts at being witty. His lack of humour is shown by the little he made of an idea he had the luck, a dangerous one for his fame, of lighting upon before Voltaire: comparison between the effects of tragedies and of sermons ("Of Preaching"; cf. Voltaire, "Vision de Babouc," vii).

² "Witty Characters and conceited Newes," printed with his poem "A Wife," 1614 (posthumous). These characters are partly by him, partly, says the title, by "other learned gentlemen his friends," but judging from the unity of style, he must have revised the latter; great success, 20th ed. in 1673. "Works," ed. Raimbault, 1856.

of all sorts. He represents, seated in his tavern, a "pot-poet," whom his printer pays well, not because he has written a good book, or even rimed a clever ballad, but because he has invented a catching title, which is enough to secure success, and that "maintains him in ale a fortnight." As a rule, this sort of man does not compose books, but rather complaints on the fellow that was last hanged at Tyburn: "His frequent'st workes goe out in single sheets, and are chanted from market to market to a vile tune and a worse throat: whilst the poore country wench melts like her butter to heare them."¹

These authors were observing more especially their neighbour, as La Bruyère will do; others more willingly observe their own selves, as Montaigne had done. A Norwich physician, kind, serious, on the verge of morose-

¹ "Micro-Cosmographie, or a Peece of the World discovered in Essayes and Characters," 1628 (5 ed. in two years, 14th in 1676; mod. reprint by Arber), by John Earle, 1601-65, a royalist, of a moderate and conciliatory turn of mind, who died bishop of Salisbury. Good description of "Pauls Walke," the cathedral which continued, until Laud's reform, to be used as a public parlour, "a heape of stones and men with a vast confusion of languages"; cf. above, II. p. 301. Politicians are there ever talking: "They are not halfe so busie at the Parliament" (LII). French translation by Dymock: "Le Vice ridiculé," Louvain, 1671. On the survival, till our day, of the "pot-poet," riming in the same taverns the same ballads, on the same subjects or nearly so, printed on the same "single sheets," see the beforequoted article (vol. II. p. 409) of Mr. MacDonagh on the "Ballads of the People," in the *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1903.

Better than Earle or any one else, Charles Sorel has shown by his "Polyandre, histoire comique," 1648, how near to real novels were collections of essays and characters, for this particular *genre* was following in France, at the same time, the same destiny: "Vous verrez donc en ce livre, sous le nom de divers hommes, la sottise de quelques poètes et amoureux insensés, les fanfaronnades de quelques gens d'espée, les goinfreries des escorniffeurs et mouches de cour, les divers caprices de quelques femmes, les fourbes des Empyriques, des Alchymistes et des faux Magiciens." We shall be very far removed from the wondrous adventures of princes and princesses in fashionable romances, "mais il y a d'autres gents qui ayment mieux voir de petites aventures d'une visite de Paris ou d'une promenade, telles qu'il en pourroit arriver à eux ou aux personnes de leur connoissance, parce que cela leur parait plus naturel et croyable."

ness, living apart, away from noise, in the midst of his books, takes pleasure in noting down the movements of his thoughts, and the manner in which everyday happenings, common occurrences, and, above all, the problem of life react on his mind and sensibility. He looks at himself, and writes, as an impartial witness, an account of what he sees, good, bad, or indifferent. He is at the same time spectator and spectacle, and as he remains sincere, his little volume turns out to be a remarkable essay in naturalistic psychology. He had written for himself and for a few friends. The manuscript circulated, fell into the hands of a pirate, who printed it all wrong: Sir Thomas Browne then gave a correct edition of his "*Religio Medici*."¹ The book at once had the success which, since the time of Elizabeth, accounts of journeys round the world had never failed to have. People saw in it, and very justly, the relation of an exploration of that "microcosm," as Earle said, the human being.

¹ "*Religio Medici*," London, 1642, 1st authorised ed. 1643, innumerable reprints, e.g. by Greenhill, 1881; facsimile of the first by the same, 1883. Latin translation of the "*Religio*," 1644, French translation (from the Latin), by Le Febvre, "*La Religion du Médecin* . . . par Th. Brown, Médecin renommé à Norwich," pr. in Holland, 1668, 12mo; "*Works*," ed. Wilkin, 1836, 4 vols.; ed. Sayle, 1904-7, 3 vols.; biography, with some new documents, by Gosse, "*English Men of Letters*," 1905. Born in 1605, Browne studied at Oxford, received his doctor's degree at Leyden, lived at Norwich from 1634, and died there in 1682. He wrote his "*Religio*" ab. 1636: "The intention was not publick" (preface). His "*Hydriotaphia; Urn-burial*," 1658, is an essay on the ancient modes of burying the dead, with many reflections, eloquent or touching, on the vain efforts of men not to perish utterly: "But all was vanity, feeding the wind and folly. The Egyptian mummies which Cambyzes or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams." His "*Pseudodoxia Epidemica*," 1646, is a (very faulty) contribution to the great experimental inquiry on human knowledge and beliefs advocated by Bacon. Like Bacon himself, Browne, with all his learning, admitted a quantity of myths; he had doubts as to all sorts of things, but none regarding sorceresses: those who do not believe in them, he says in his "*Religio*," "are obliquely and upon consequence a sort not of Infidels, but of Atheists."

As frank as Montaigne, Browne had a less wide experience of life and a mind less agile and sunny. His bent is more usually towards serious problems; the anxieties of the period have told upon him; the question of the hereafter is the subject of his more frequent meditations. "My common conversation I do acknowledge austere, my behaviour full of rigour, sometimes not without morosity. . . . I love to lose myself in a mystery, to pursue my reason to an *O Altitudo!*" Happiness can be reached only in heaven: "Whatsoever else the world terms Happiness is to me a story out of Pliny, a tale of Boccace or Malizspini." But he speaks of those grave problems with calm and resignation, often, it is true, the sort of calm that follows tempests. He awaits a clearing of the storm to take up his pen. "Let me be nothing, if within the compass of my self I do not find the battail of Lepanto, Passion against Reason, Reason against Faith, Faith against the Devil, and my Conscience against all."

Browne had specified in his title that he had taken for his subject his religion; by this must be understood his philosophy as well, all his train of thoughts on the great problems of human life. He declares, from the first, that his theology is drawn from two books: one is the Bible, the other is "that universal and publick manuscript that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all," namely, Nature. He studies nature, therefore, with the help of his reason and of the experimental methods newly expounded. He dares pass judgment on a quantity of admitted beliefs and venerated people. The first chapters of Genesis seem to him to show signs of the "mystical method of Moses bred up in the Hieroglyphical Schools of the Egyptians." He irreverently names Gargantua when writing of Samson. But raillery is not his usual tone, far from it. To study much and compare much will

always incline an honest mind to toleration, and such is the case with Thomas Browne. The final impression he leaves is that of a kindly thinker who, at a time when men still slaughtered one another for questions of surplices and genuflections, pleaded for indulgence, discerned the part of true devotion lying under superstitious observances, was moved when he saw a procession, and "could never hear an Ave Mary bell without an elevation." Like the thinkers of the Renaissance, his literary ancestors, and those of the eighteenth century who will continue him, he prides himself on being a citizen of the world, on hating neither French, Dutch, nor Spanish, and feeling aversion only for the silly and untaught multitude, the low-thinking rabble ; but note, adds he, expressing one more eighteenth-century opinion, "there is a rabble even among the gentry."

Browne owes to the qualities of his mind the merits of his well-balanced style. Sincere and honest, he is naturally simple ; he is eloquent without effort. The pleasure he obviously finds in using, at times, strange words of a more or less scientific build will be easily condoned by all those who remember that Browne's set purpose is to show himself as he was—"The world that I regard is myself"—and that the likeness would not have been so good if we had missed this trace of the author's learned meditations and this sign of a life spent among books: "*Le style c'est l'homme même.*" What, in another, would be affectation is with him truth to nature, to his own nature.

The study of the movements of the soul is so much in favour at this period that slight inclinations or foibles, diseases of the will or deviations of character, are held worthy of attention. The most eminent, perhaps, of all the moralists of the day assigns to himself the task of thoroughly fathoming one of these innumerable subjects,

which most of his peers would have despatched in fifty lines. He searches it conscientiously, looks at it through his magnifying-glass, examines it by the light of his lamp, by that of the sun or of the stars; he divides and subdivides his matter, using more and more powerful lenses, inspecting the slightest ramification and tiniest radicle. He spends twenty years writing his essay, almost twenty more perfecting it, and leaves at last a large volume entitled "*The Anatomy of Melancholy*," which represents the effort of his whole life.¹

The work is preceded by an immense preface (written for the sixth edition), which would in itself form a small volume, and is in its way a masterpiece. Robert Burton exposes the inside of his mind in as bold and free a manner as Montaigne had done, and as the great humourists of the eighteenth century will do, Sterne especially, who used the "*Anatomy*" as an abandoned mine where any one could take what he pleased.

Burton, then, communes with himself, and takes pleasure in telling what he feels and what he is: "I have lived a silent, sedentary, solitary private life . . . penned up most part in my study; . . . by my profession a divine." He has read much and at random; he has "never travelled but in map or card," pleased with his modest rank and quiet pursuits. "I am not poor, I am not rich. . . . I have little, I want nothing . . . a mere spectator of other

¹ "*The Anatomy of Melancholy*, What it is, with all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, and severall cures of it . . . philosophically, medicinally, historically opened and cut up, by Democritus Junior" (but signed and dated at the last page: "From my Studie in Christ Church, Oxon., Decemb. 5, 1620. Robert Burton"), Oxford, 1621, 4to; numerous ed. constantly revised by the author, who was vicar of St. Thomas, in the suburbs of Oxford, and spent in this town almost all his life (1577-1640). He purposely chose a slight subject after having made ample general studies: "This by-stream, which, as a rillet, is deducted from the main channel of my studies" (preface). Modern ed. by Shilleto and Bullen, 1893, 3 vols. By him also, "*Philosophaster*," a Latin comedy, acted Oxford, 1618, Roxb. Club, 1862.

men's fortunes and adventures and how they act their parts, which methinks are diversely presented unto me as from a common theatre and scene. I hear new news every day . . . rumours of war, plagues, fires, inundations, thefts, murders, massacres . . . of towns taken, cities besieged in France, Germany, Turkey, Persia, Poland . . . a vast confusion of vows, wishes, actions, edicts . . . new books every day, pamphlets, opinions, schisms, heresies," and an infinite quantity of other things, for enumerations are Burton's forte, and Rabelais even is not ampler nor more varied. He observes, with the same eye as Fielding, but not the same warmth of heart, men's injustices ; he sees the worst scoundrels, the most sanguinary and dissolute bandits, honoured with the name of "heroical and worthy captains." And so great is human vanity that volunteers are always found, ready to leave wives, children, and friends for sixpence a day, if even they get that, "to enter upon breaches, lie sentinel perdue . . . marching bravely on, with a cheerful noise of drums and trumpets . . . motions of plumes, woods of pikes . . ." in the hope of obtaining fame, "a mere flash," that will be "gone in an instant." Out of "fifteen thousand proletaries slain in battle, scarce fifteen are recorded in history, or one alone, the general perhaps, and after a while, his and their names are likewise blotted out, the whole battle itself is forgotten."

In opposition to present miseries, Burton organises in his turn, after Plato, Campanella, More, Bacon, all of whom he quotes, his New Atlantis, where streets will be straight and churchyards relegated outside the towns, it will be possible to acquire nobility by merit, but also to lose it by demerit, commoners will be admitted to all functions, foreign languages will be taught in schools in a practical manner, not by means of the "tedious precepts ordinarily used ;" halls will be built "in which shall be kept engines for quenching of fire," hospitals and charitable institutions will

be supported by the State : and thereupon a violent onset, very modern in tone, like much of the rest, against generous benefactors, "who, when by fraud and rapine they have extorted all their lives, oppressed whole provinces, societies, etc., give something to pious uses, build a satisfactory alms-house, school or bridge, etc., at their last end, or before perhaps, which is no otherwise than . . . rob a thousand to relieve ten"—an eloquent yet not altogether satisfactory satire, since, by merely passing them over in silence, Burton gives the advantage to those who, having amassed fortunes anyhow, make no foundation at all and keep all to themselves. In the country of Burton's dreams there will be few functionaries, no monopolies ; weights and measures will be unified, and this reform shall be based—a noteworthy suggestion—on astronomy.

As for his way of writing and composing, Burton confesses that it is hazardous and changeful. "'Tis not my study to compose neatly," the journey will be through roads "sometimes fair, sometimes foul," here in a champaign country, there "by woods, groves, hills, dales . . ." ¹ As for "those other faults of barbarism, Doric dialect, extemporanean style, tautologies, apish imitation, a rhapsody of rags gathered together from several dung-hills, excrements of authors, toys, fopperies confusedly tumbled out without art, invention, wit, learning, harsh, raw, rude, fantastical, absurd, insolent, indiscreet, ill-composed, indigested, vain, scurrile, idle, dull and dry, I confess all ('tis partly affected), thou canst not think worse of me than I do of myself. . . . I should be per adventure loth to read him or thee so writing."

True, does he add, I might have written in Latin, which

¹ "Au demourant," Montaigne said, "mon langage n'a rien de facile et poli ; il est aspre et desdaigneux, ayant ses dispositions libres et desréglées, et me plaist ainsi, sinon par mon jugement, par mon inclination" (book ii. chap. 17).

has a better air, but I would never have found a printer. Anything in English "is welcome nowadays to our mercenary stationers . . . but in Latin they will not deal." A theologian by profession, and divinity being "the queen of professions," he might rather have written a pious treatise; but there again he found difficulties. For "there be so many books in that kind, so many commentators, treatises, pamphlets, expositions, sermons, that whole teams of oxen cannot draw them; and had I been as forward and ambitious as some others, I might have haply printed a sermon at Paul's Cross, a sermon in St. Maries, Oxon., a sermon in Christ-Church, or a sermon before the right honourable, right reverend, a sermon before the right worshipful, a sermon in Latin, in English, a sermon with a name, a sermon without, a sermon, a sermon . . ." ¹ Plenty of others have printed theirs, and others enough will print more in the future, and among these last will figure that other parson destined to honour so strangely the "queen of professions," Burton's imitator, Laurence Sterne.

In all these ways of thinking and speaking, the humourist is recognised. Burton is the first in date of those English writers deserving such a name and no other so well. In the midst of the brambles with which his work is obstructed, shine each one of the humourist's staple qualities: good sense half veiled by raillery, light singing to an accompaniment of sober-toned music, innumerable wit sparks producing something more than a vain crackling: they sting, they give light, they may at times start a warming fire or a purifying conflagration.

He enters his subject with the seriousness of a mediæval scholastic beginning a theological "Summa" meant to fill his whole life. The rigour of his divisions in parts, sections, members, and sub-sections, is equalled only by the desultoriness of his thoughts, the incoherence of his

¹ "Democritus Junior to the Reader."

quotations, the amplitude of his digressions and the multiplicity of anecdotes leading us so far away that we soon lose sight of the subject, and do not know where we are. Not at all dismayed, Burton recapitulates as if nothing was the matter, starts anew, in most dignified manner, on a different road or another blind alley, quotes the ancients and the moderns, the practice of the Moors, the Turks, the Japanese and the Chinese, appeals to Aristotle, Chaucer and Montaigne, or adduces the example of Tycho Brahe, the Dane, who managed to escape melancholy in his castle of Uranienborg in the island of Hven. He tells in his turn, after William of Malmesbury and before Mérimée, the story of the "Vénus d'Ille"; he relates the case of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and of the drunken peasant: and the story is that of Sly in the Prologue of the "Taming of the Shrew."¹ His knowledge is overflowing; waves of quotations, comparisons and examples² follow each other, among which his own thoughts founder more than once, and are seen no more.

Everything is connected with everything; a minute enough study of any subject can prove this. Burton, having studied his favourite one during twenty, thirty, forty years, having examined all that was nearly or distantly related to it, gone into causes and shown consequences, happened, when at last he laid down his pen, to have dealt with all the problems which interest, frighten, or delight mankind: life and death, happiness and misery, love in all its varieties and branches. On each point he had had some example to quote or advice to give. Wisdom with him had often spoken

¹ Part III., section ii., member 1, sub-section 1, and part II., section ii., member 4.

² After endless details on dæmons, goddesses, *lamia*, etc., and many quotations and references (III., ii. 1, 1), he adds: "Read more of this question in . . ." and thereupon follows a mention of thirteen supplementary authors, with due indication of book, chapter and section for each.

by the mouth of Folly ; the scoffer had sometimes talked as a warm-hearted friend: "Go on merrily to heaven" (this had already been More's view); "if the way be troublesome, and you in misery," do not despair, many happinesses remain within your reach ; "or put the case thou art now forsaken of the world, dejected, contemned, yet comfort thyself ; as it was said to Agar in the wilderness, ' God sees thee, He takes notice of thee.'"¹

His study of the best remedies for melancholy affords him the occasion of drawing a number of charming pictures. He recommends music, whose virtue is so great that it would "drive away the divel himself" ; sports, but used moderately: "If the body be overtired, it tires the mind" ; the pleasures of country life ; fishing, described with a pleasant grace reminding one of Walton ; journeys on foot, praised with a good-humour worthy of Töpffer ; reading, a most efficacious remedy unless the disease happens precisely to have been caused by excessive reading, as was the case with Don Quixote ; the telling of "old stories by the fireside or in the sun, as old folks usually do" ; pleasant sights, such as beautiful landscapes, fine gardens—he cannot help adding handsome girls, but we see later, in the chapters on love, that this last kind of sight is, on the contrary, most dangerous.² To be present at the public festivities given in honour of a newly arrived ambassador has also great efficacy. Since the days of Burton, this custom has gone out of use : hence doubtless the recrudescence of melancholy in the world.

It was impossible, writing a medico-moral treatise, to come nearer the psychological and realistic novel than Burton does : all the elements of the *genre*, including even the landscape, are to be found in the "Anatomy of

¹ Part II., section iii., member 1, sub-section 1.

² The whole in Part II., section ii., member 4.

Melancholy," the intrigue being excepted, but it is not the most important among them, far from it. Burton thus deserves to be quoted apart in the long line of the predecessors of illustrious English novelists, and a place of honour should always be reserved for his portrait in their galleries of ancestors.

III.

Readers numerous, well disposed, anxious for instruction, encourage also those explorers and observers who try to unravel origins, and examine what had been, in the past, man, society, empires and successive civilisations. Learned writers and historians of the time of Elizabeth who survive under James enjoy an unbroken favour and practise their art with more ardour than ever. The illustrious Camden, who had given his "*Britannia*" in 1586, published his "*Remaines*" in 1605, we know with what success. It was a simple bundle of notes, excerpts, and observations, but it just happened they were more and more liked as bringing one, in a way, nearer to realities. Daniel the poet and Speed the chronicler print their histories of England in 1611 and 1612. William Habington, father of the poet who sang of "*Castara*," amasses documents in view of a history of Edward IV., which will be published by his son; Knollys continues his researches on the Turks and their emperors. During the same period shine Bacon, Raleigh, Selden; Drummond of Hawthornden prepares a history of Scotland, Heylyn a history of the Reformation in England, John Spottiswoode a history of the church of Scotland, Lord Herbert of Cherbury a life of Henry VIII.: D'Ewes, sifting carefully his facts and dates, compiles a journal of Elizabeth's Parliaments, and takes daily notes which he will use to write his memoirs. Fuller publishes his

history of the Crusades, and collects the materials for his "Church History of Britain from the birth of Jesus Christ," and for his ample and famous "History of the Worthies of England," destined to see the light during the following period.¹

More and more important and numerous historical texts and archæological works are now printed,² while the connection between the *genres* cultivated by moralists, essayists, historians, and antiquaries, is evidenced by the alacrity and success with which most of them pass from one to another of these styles. Besides his "Henry VIII.," his verses, his philosophical works, Lord Herbert of Cherbury will leave an autobiography, partaking at once of the psychological essay, of history, and above all of

¹ "The Holy Warre," 1639; "The Church History of Britain from the birth of Jesus Christ untill the year 1648," London, 1655, fol. (a considerable work with many documents included; Fuller's usual blemishes of bad taste and misapplied wit); "The History of the Worthies of England," London, 1662 (a sort of dictionary, the fruit of enormous researches, and in which Fuller gives for each shire the biography of all the famous—not always very famous—men born there, and a quantity of other details. Proportions cannot always be commended: Shakespeare occupies the same space as an obscure Mr. Byfield on the opposite page, iii. 127). On historical art, as practised previously, see above, I. pp. 113, 166, 197, 522; II. 93, 322.

² See e.g. H. Spelman, "Archæologus in modum Glossarii," 1626 (a first attempt at a dictionary of the Du Cange type; not carried further than the word *luto*), "Concilia, Decreta, Leges" (1066-1531), London, 1639, ff.; W. Wats, "Matthæi Paris . . . Historia," London, 1640; Roger Twysden, "Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Decem," London, 1652; Dugdale, "Monasticon Anglicanum," 1655, ff. 3 vols., "Antiquities of Warwickshire," 1656; treatises and publications of Selden (further, p. 512), of Ussher (1581-1656), the learned Archbishop of Armagh: "A Discourse of the Religion anciently professed by the Irish," Dublin, 1623, "Britanniarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates," 1639, "Annales Veteris Testamenti," 1659, etc., "Works," Dublin, 1847 ff., 17 vols.; painstaking researches of Weever who, says he, "travailed over the most parts of all England and some part of Scotland," and published the results of his labours under the title of: "Ancient funerall Monuments with in the united Monarchie of Great Britaine and Ireland and the Ilands adjacent, with the dissolved monasteries therein contained; their Founders and what eminent persons have beene in the same interred," London, 1631, fol.; long preliminary discourse on the burial customs of the past.

the heroical novel.¹ Fuller compiles a book made up of historical biographies, essays and characters grouped together.² The celebrated Selden, liberal, sarcastic, indifferent to honours, of prodigious learning, one of the few Englishmen who attained European fame before the eighteenth century,³ examines the origins of British laws and customs, edits old texts, studies Oriental languages, searches some of the most distant and least trodden fields of knowledge, and, in all his works, pays special attention to the manners of peoples and the movements of the human mind.

This learned historian, this legist, this bold observer, talked as willingly as he wrote. His conversations with his friends abounded in aphorisms, satirical portraits, ironical or serious advice, striking and witty thoughts, easy to remember. One of his secretaries collected them, and the great man, of boundless fame, owes it to this tiny

¹ "The Autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury," ed. S. Lee, London, 1886, 8vo; the first ed. had been given by Horace Walpole in 1764; to be compared with Sir Kenelm Digby's even more mirific account of himself (1603-65): "Private Memoirs written by himself," ed. Nicolas, London, 1827, 8vo, composed under the guise of a novel with a key, a kind of writing very much in fashion then, but more properly belonging to a later period; the part played by these two men in the philosophical movement of the century also connects them with later times.²

² "The Holy State; The Profane State," Cambridge, 1642, fol., a mixture of biographies and essays: "Of Travelling, of Company, the Good Husband, the Harlot, the Atheist," etc.; picturesque and pleasant style, marred at times by bad taste and ridiculous conceits; unpardonable biography of Joan of Arc, classed with the "profane" ones, in company with Cæsar Borgia and that Joan of Naples whose "sinnes," Fuller says in his affected style, "were almost hoarse with crying to heaven for revenge."

³ "Le plus grand homme que l'Angleterre ait jamais eu pour les Belles Lettres."—Colomiès, "Recueil de Particularités," 1665. John Selden, born in 1584, studied at Oxford, was called to the bar in 1612, became the friend of Jonson, Camden, Sir Robert Cotton, Drayton, William Browne, and others. Long a member of Parliament, from 1623, he was opposed to the extremists of both parties; his knowledge of Eastern languages was a very rare accomplishment at that date; he died in 1654. "Opera omnia," London, 1726, 34 vols. fol.

booklet that he ranks among authors still reprinted and generally read. Specialists alone continue to consult, when bound to do so, his thick folios, most of them in Latin, on Briton or Saxon laws, on "Titles of Honour," where he treats of dignities and precedence, and learnedly discusses the problem of whether there were kings before the flood; on the story of "Tithes" from the time of Abraham; on the "Arundel Marbles," an antiquary and epigraphist's work, remarkable at its date; on Semitic antiquities; on the "Closed Sea," that famous work of his which could not prevail against Grotius.¹ But his "Table Talk . . . or his sence of various matters of weight and high consequence," is still read²; if it does not give a complete idea of Selden's mind, it shows at least with what boldness thinkers were beginning to speak of things held holy and of accepted truths. Ironical and destructive, he takes special pleasure, as Voltaire will do later, in deriding generally admitted ideas, respected notions, revered beliefs, all that which habit has so long caused to be accepted that good people do not dream of discussing it: religion, priesthood, kingdom. Those great statues, bordering the road followed by mankind, seem carved in imperishable marble; Selden touches them with his fingertip and the figure is cracked. The case is alarming

¹ "Jani Anglorum facies altera," 1610, on the survival of the Briton and Saxon Laws; "Titles of Honour," 1614; "History of Tythes," 1617, to which he owed serious difficulties with the clergy; "De Diis Syris," 1617, on the Asiatic idols mentioned in the Bible; "Marmora Arundeliana," 1629, on the antique statues and inscriptions collected in Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor for the Earl of Arundel, and placed by him in the gardens of Arundel House, Strand; Selden's interpretation of the inscriptions was not faultless, but was very creditable for the time; part of the marbles are now in Oxford; "Mare Clausum seu de Dominio Maris libri duo," 1635, in English, "with additional discoursēs" by M. Nedham, 1652, in answer to the (unanswerable) "Mare Liberum" of Grotius, 1609.

² "Table Talk, being the discourses of J. Selden, or his sence," etc. London, 1689, 4to, ed. by his secretary, R. Milward; reprinted by Arber, 1868.

and may encourage other profanations ; a sacrilegious hand has been laid on the hallowed statue, and yet the thunderbolt has not fallen.

He speaks without reverence of baptism, of the authority of the Scriptures, of the doings of divines and preachers, whatever be their sect ; of kings, who are "a thing men have made for their own sake, for quietness' sake." He excels in ironical comparisons and striking aphorisms : "Marriage is a desperate thing ; the frogs in Æsop were extream wise ; they had a great mind to some water, but they would not leap into the well, because they could not get out again." Men in power should govern noiselessly : "You see when they row in a barge, they that do drudgery work, flash, and puff, and swear, but he that governs sits quietly at the stern, and scarce is seen to stir."

The historical writings composed during this period differ in several respects from the previous ones. First, the point of view, so conspicuously particularist, of the authors who wrote under the Tudors, broadens in a marked degree: the main work of that class during the reign of James I. will not be a chronicle of England but a history of the world. A writer, Edward Grimeston, will devote his whole life to turning into English, histories of the Indies, of the French, the Dutch, the Spaniards, the Greeks, the Romans, the Turks, as well as descriptions of "the Estates, Empires, and Principallities of the World," China, Peru, and Monomotapa not being forgotten ; each of these voluminous compositions found readers in plenty, and most of them had several editions.¹ More and more importance is attributed to sources, exactitude, reference to original records.² Sir Simonds

¹ On Edward Grimeston, "translator and sergeant-at-arms," who wrote under the two first Stuarts, see Mr. F. S. Boas's notice in *Modern Philology*, Chicago, April, 1906.

² And authors pride themselves on such researches: prefaces of Camden (guilty, however, of an unpardonable chapter 83^b in his "Britannia," ed. of

d'Ewes, having finished his great undertaking, of no literary value, but of peerless historical worth, on Elizabethan Parliaments (in which all the orators of the day appear one after the other, Bacon foremost among them, and in which he makes mention of every incident, without omitting that of March 1, 1585, when the sitting had to be adjourned because, as the Clerk of the House explained, the Speaker had taken "some Physick"), lays out for himself a plan of life, and enumerates the works, all historical, to which he intends to devote the rest of his days. The principal one was to be a history of Great Britain, entirely written from original sources, "to be drawn especially out of record . . . for the reformation of all the chronicles or histories of this kind yet extant."¹ He dies without having fulfilled his task, but then combative Heylyn sharpens his quill, watches authors, and woe to those whose dates are false and facts ill-verified! An ancestor of modern critics, he follows, page by page, and word by word, the text of the writers summoned before his tribunal, and notes each of their blunders, doing thereby useful work. More useful, however, it would have proved if his "love to Truth," to use his word, had been as disinterested as he pretends; but he blows, at each of his lucky finds, more noisy

1602-3; see Stevenson, "Asser's Life of Alfred," Oxford, 1904, p. xxiv), Daniel, Simonds d'Ewes, Herbert of Cherbury, etc. The latter dedicates his book to the king: "The substance thereof in all home affairs hath been drawn chiefly out of your Majesty's records."—"Life and Raigne of King Henry VIII.," 1649, fol.

¹ Preface to the "Journals of all the Parliaments . . . of Queen Elizabeth," London, 1682, fol. (fine frontispiece: the Queen in Parliament). D'Ewes worked at it from 1629 to 163[2]; born in 1602, long a member of the House of Commons, he died in 1650. His "Autobiography and Correspondence" was published by J. O. Halliwell, London, 1845, 2 vols. 8vo (mentions of his visits to libraries and inspections of parish registers, e.g. ii. pp. 90, 94; great admiration for the "invaluable truth" of the historian De Thou, ii. p. 92).

trumpets than the cult of Truth requires, and his too visible joy at others' faults obscures more than once his own judgment.¹

Progress of a different sort is made at the same time ; the fact that history is not merely a science, but also an art, begins to be recognised, and will soon become a literary dogma. "Among the greatest wants in our ancient Authors," wrote Edmund Bolton, under James I., "are the wants of art and style." The care for form must not, to be sure, be prejudicial to truth : "Truth is the sovereign praise of an History" ; but art and style "add to the lustre of the works and delights of the reader." "He who would pen our affairs in English . . . ought to have a singular care thereof." The recording of events, without any study of their causes and consequences, is not to write history : "He who relates the events without their premisses and circumstances, deserves not the name of an historian, as being like to him who numbers the bones of a man anatomized, or presenteth unto us the bare skeleton, without declaring the nature of the fabrick or teaching the use of parts." Let the one who intends to be a true historian and worthy of his country choose the best models, such as the historical works of Sir Thomas More, some passages in Sir Henry Savile, the works of Hayward, of Raleigh, and above all, of Bacon.² The chroniclers of

¹ "Examen Historicum : or a discovery and examination of the mistakes, falsities and defects in some modern histories, occasioned by the partiality and inadvertancies of their severall authours," London, 1659, 8vo, attacking especially Fuller and his "Church History." Born in Oxfordshire, in 1600, and a supposed Franco-maniac, Heylyn travelled in France in 1625, collecting satirical notes meant to show his real dispositions ; they first appeared without his assent in 1656 (above, p. 489). Very industrious, and of a quarrelsome disposition, he left a quantity of historical and geographical works, and took part in a number of disputes. He was a royalist and a follower of Laud ; he died in 1662.

² "Hypercritica ; or a rule of judgment for writing or reading our histories," of doubtful date, but certainly written under James I., ab. 1618

old, who knew no art, are now subjects for raillery. Cowley will not enumerate the artifices of the fine ladies he loves: if I did, thinks he,

I more voluminous should grow
(Chiefly if I like them should tell
All change of weathers that befell)
Than Holinshed or Stow.¹

Bacon, in his historical writings, especially his "Henry VII.," was continuing More's tradition, but modified by his own tendencies and temperament.² He beholds human strife with Olympian equanimity, and draws consequences from what he sees with the placidity of an algebraist solving a problem. His picture has therefore something frozen and lifeless; history must give the impression of life, as its object is to represent life, an extinct life which must be reanimated before us. Hence the charm and the difficulty of an art which needs so many qualities rarely found in the same man: soundness of judgment, sharpness of a discriminating mind, taste, conscience, heart. Bacon has several of them, and thus his work is of great value, but he has not them all; the Gibbons, the Augustin Thierry's, the Macaulays of times to come will improve his method; they will try to equal his impartiality, the correctness of his style, and his good taste; they will not imitate his imperturbable calm, the monotonous majesty of sentences so long that one

(1st ed. Oxford, 1722; see Spingarn, "Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century," Oxford, 1908, vol. i. pp. 83, 84, 85, 107 ff), by Edmund Bolton, poet (see e.g. a piece by him in "England's Helicon") and historian, translator of Florus, author of a history of Nero, 1624; died ab. 1633. Cf. Ascham's in many ways similar opinions on historical art, above, vol. II. p. 98.

¹ "The Chronicle, a Ballad," of uncertain date, in "Works," 1668.

² "The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh," London, 1622 ("Works," ed. Spedding, etc., 1890, vol. vi.), soon translated into Latin by himself, reprinted on the continent, and considered throughout Europe as a classical work.

loses breath in reading them aloud, nor that fondness for enumerations which leads him to observe that his hero, Henry VII., had three motives for convening Parliament, and three titles to the crown, and that for three reasons these three titles were contestable: a sacrifice made to that love of symmetry propagated by the Renaissance which an artist like Palladio had allowed to govern his architecture, and a writer like d'Aubigné the composition of his great "*Histoire Universelle*."¹

What Bacon lacks is partly supplied by Raleigh: human emotion and sympathy, a language more supple, less solemn, better adapted to the differences of occasion and subject.

At the accession of James, Raleigh's enemies had succeeded in having him imprisoned and tried for treason: he was alleged to have contested the king's title, intrigued in favour of Arabella Stuart, etc. The accusations were far-reaching, but the evidence was meagre. Sir Edward Coke, the king's Attorney, compensated for the lack of proofs by the abundance of his insults, in the midst of which it is a striking spectacle to see Raleigh, as firm as on the deck of his ship, keeping his presence of mind, parrying blows, answering with moderation, almost gaiety, in spite of the stake that was being played for, and which was his own head. "Thou art a monster!" the Attorney shrieked; "thou hast an English face but a Spanish heart. . . ."

"*Raleigh*. Let me answer for myself.

"*Attorney*. Thou shalt not. . . . Thou viper, for I thou thee, thou traitor! . . . spider of hell . . . I want words sufficient to express thy viperous treasons.

¹ "*Histoire Universelle* . . . dédiée à la Postérité," Maillé, 1616, fol.; three volumes, containing each five books, each of which ends with a treaty of peace, or a peace edict, "servant de borne," says the printer to the reader; other no less artificial complications and symmetries are also revealed by the same.

"*Raleigh*. I think you want words, indeed, for you have repeated one thing half a dozen times."¹

The jury, on whom the big words and theatrical attitudes of Coke were producing their effect (at one moment he had seated himself and refused to proceed, under pretence that, in recommending him to use more decent language, the judges were siding with "the traitor"), returned a verdict of guilty, and Raleigh was sentenced to be hanged, "cut down alive," disembowelled, his bowels "thrown into the fire before his eyes," then beheaded and quartered. The Chief Justice, Popham, volunteered the prediction that, besides all this, he would probably suffer the additional punishment of going to hell.²

The King reprieved him, and Raleigh remained a prisoner in the Tower, with the scaffold ever threatening. He obtained, after fourteen years, the permission to leave his prison and realise, if that could be, the dream of his whole life, the discovery of Manoa, the capital of the gold country. The King, passionately bent on peace, and anxious as to possible quarrels with Spain, had reluctantly consented; he forbade the Queen to go and visit on board his ship the audacious explorer, who sailed at last on the 12th of June, 1617, under the gloomiest auspices, having with him the scum of English harbours.³

¹ "Works," ed. Oldys and Birch (inadequate), Oxford, 1829, 8 vols., i. 649 ff. Cf. Brushfield, "Bibliography of Sir W. Raleigh," 2d. ed., 1908.

² "You have been taxed by the world with the defence of most heathenish and blasphemous opinions, which I list not repeat. . . . Let not any devil persuade you to think there is no eternity in heaven; if you think thus you shall find eternity of hell-fire" (vol. i. p. 689). Cf. Raleigh's farewell letter to his wife when, after this sentence, he expected immediate execution: "The everlasting God, infinite, powerful, and inscrutable, that Almighty God which is goodness itself, mercy itself, the true life and light, keep thee and thine and have mercy on me, and teach me to forgive my persecutors and false accusers, and send us to meet again in his glorious kingdom! My true wife, farewell, bless my poor boy, pray for me and let my good God hold you both in his arms" (i. p. 648).

³ See, however, his remarkable "Orders to be observed by the commanders

Success would have cleansed him from all accusations, and he met only with mishaps; having landed at "Calliana," now Cayenne, his efforts to reach the auriferous territories (quite real, as has been shown since by the French and Dutch exploitations) were baffled; epidemics caused havoc among his crew; contrary to his promises, he could not avoid some bloody encounters with the Spaniards, in the course of one of which his brave young son was killed. Ambassador Gondomar was constantly protesting in London against Raleigh's "Armada."

On his return, the navigator was apprehended, and the king decided that, to pacify Spain, the sentence should be carried out which, fifteen years before, had condemned Raleigh to death as a traitor with "a Spanish heart." Anne of Denmark, the frivolous but kind queen, tried in vain to save him. All the king would do was to sign an order stating that "Our pleasure is to have the head only of the said Sir Walter Raleigh cut off, at or within our palace of Westminster." Raleigh, after having smoked one last pipe (which his enemies described as indecent), and taken leave of his relations, was beheaded in the old Palace Yard, on October 29, 1618.

The greater part of his prison years had been devoted to the composition of his "History of the World";¹ he had prepared himself for this task by considerable studies, having been all his life a great reader. "He studied most in his sea-voyages," wrote Aubrey, "where he carried

of the fleet and land companies . . . given at Plymouth, May 3, 1617," in view of maintaining discipline, keeping the ships in communication by signals, establishing friendly relations with the Indians, observing the rules of hygiene, etc.; "Works," vol. viii. p. 683.

¹ "The History of the World," London, 1614, fol. (maps and some battle scenes, a frontispiece placing the work under the protection of Truth and Experience); in Oldys and Birch's edition, vol. ii. ff. In the Stationers' Registers, the following entry, under date of April 15, 1611: "A booke called The History of the World, written by Sir Walter Rawleighe" (Arber's Transcript, iii. 457).

always a trunke of bookes along with him, and had nothing to divert him." Much less had he to divert him in the Tower. His intention had been to write the story of nations up to modern times, then to limit himself more especially to the history of England and of France. He was unable, however, even to finish the first part, and having begun at Chaos, he could not go further than the successors of Alexander. What was newest in his book was the breadth of his views, the charm, the interest, and often the depth of the philosophical reflections, the attraction of a style which he knew how to make, according to occasion, high-coloured and metaphoric,¹ or sarcastic, or sorrowful, avoiding almost completely the bad taste and the conceits so much in favour in his day.

The main feeling pervading his work is one of melancholy, that feeling which appeared here and there so persistently during this period, and which the prisoner's experience justified only too well. His melancholy, however, came from no weak heart; he looked at the storm with a sad but fearless eye. Observing the fate of men and empires, he was deeply impressed by the transitoriness of things: so many troubles, perils, and massacres to conquer the world! . . . "And yet hath Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Syria, Macedon, Carthage, Rome, and the rest, no fruit, flower, grass nor leaf, springing upon the face of the earth, of those seeds. No, their very roots and ruins hardly remain. . . . All kingdoms and states have fallen . . . the greatest have sunk down under their own weight." Untiringly, the ambitious resume their task, a cruel and vain one, worshippers of that "Fame which plougheth up the air and soweth in the wind."

¹ Portrait of Henry VIII., ending thus: "To how many others of more desert gave he abundant flowers from whence to gather honey, and in the end of harvest burnt them in the hive!"—"Works," vol. ii. p. xvi.

Raleigh beholds the vast fields of history, and it seems to him he wanders, like Hamlet, in a churchyard, an immense resting-place where the empires of old have been laid low: "O eloquent, just and mighty Death . . . thou hast drawn together all the far-fetched greatness, all the pride, cruelty and ambition of man: and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic Jacet*."¹

Tendencies to melancholy and gift of observation combined, produce an excellent sort of humour, which is that of Raleigh; it relieves the monotony of his histories of Jephthah, Belus, or Semiramis. The present time is never far from his thoughts; he was too active and too practical to deprive himself of applications and references to contemporary events, and he thus makes his heroes and their epoch appear less distant. The wonders we hear of concerning the early ages of the world, are nothing compared to what we see with our eyes: "For we have now greater giants for vice and injustice than the world had in those days for bodily strength. For cottages and houses of clay and timber, we have raised palaces of stone: we carve them, we paint them, and adorn them with gold, insomuch that men are rather known by their houses than their houses by them."

With a mind formed under Elizabeth, he retains for his country, in spite of his sarcasms, the feelings of the former "*Laudatores patriæ*": "If it be demanded whether the Macedonian or the Roman were the best

¹ Preface, vol. ii. p. vii, book v. chap. vi., vol. vii. p. 899, and conclusion of the work, vol. vii. p. 900. This so well resembles modern melancholy that one of the wisest and best-speaking of contemporary historians, one of the least inclined to pessimism, has written in the same tone, without thinking that he was coming so near Raleigh: "L'historien qui place le moment où nous vivons dans l'ensemble de l'histoire ne peut se défendre d'une grande mélancolie. Quelque chose s'est achevé sous nos yeux; par conséquent quelque nouveauté nous menace, car l'histoire est une succession d'expériences. . . ." —Lavisse, "*Essais sur l'Allemagne Impériale*," Paris, 1887.

warrior, I will answer, The Englishman.”¹ He is filled with that spirit of curiosity which the Renaissance had quickened throughout the world, and which was leading to the triumph of experimental methods. He wants to ascertain the why and wherefore of everything: formation of society, limits of the royal power, origins of nobility; ² he discards no problems as too difficult, too mysterious, or too sacred; if he cannot solve them, he wants at least to look them in the face; it is a duty, thinks he, a courageous act to perform: “I shall never be persuaded that God hath shut up all light of learning within the lantern of Aristotle’s brains.” Chance and experience give us many lights which Aristotle alone and reason alone would not supply us with: “The cheese-wife knoweth it as well as the philosopher that sour runnet doth coagulate her milk into a curd.” The runnet is the cause of that effect, but what is the reason of that cause? The philosopher knows no more than the cheesewife.³ It is a question of observation and “experience,” not of “art,” and on this very question it was only in our time that ignorance was to be, not cleared away, but removed one step, owing to the use made of the experimental method by a man of genius, Pasteur.

Raleigh would like to believe only in things intelligible, demonstrable, or at the least probable. On the question of Biblical origins, of chaos, of light, “and of motion and heat annexed unto it,” of the problem of matter, whether

¹ Book v., chap. i, vol. vi. p. 4.

² “Kings live in the world and not above it.” Concerning nobility, he quotes Charron, whose book, “*De la Sagesse*,” had been published in 1601, and he transcribes several passages from it (book i. chap. 61 of Charron; book i. chap. ix. section 4 of Raleigh). See also his separate treatises on questions of general interest: on Parliament, on war, on the navy, etc., vol. viii. of the “*Works*”; there is seen to advantage the broad mind of a man who had led an active life, navigated, explored, who knew how to look beyond frontiers, and who thought of distant futurity.

³ Preface, vol. ii. p. xlvi.

eternal or created, of the Ark, of Babel, or else of the legends of Greek and Roman history, his attitude is the same. After a solemn recital of the succession of causes which, from Europa to Medea and to Hesione, brought about, according to Herodotus, the rape of Helen and the Trojan war, Raleigh sums up the case according to his own views, saying: "I think that Paris had no regard either to the rape of Europa, Medea, or Hesione, but was merely incited by Venus, that is by his lust, to do that which in those days was very common. For not only Greeks from barbarians, and barbarians from Greeks . . . but all people were accustomed to steal women and cattle if they could . . . and either to sell them away in some far country, or keep them to their own use."¹

Except in the passages where Raleigh appears in his own person and gives his opinion, his warmth cools down; the story becomes colourless, life extinct. If he adds much to Bacon, he leaves Gibbon much to do, and especially to introduce that supreme improvement, without which no histories will count afterwards in literature, the art of giving the reader a *continuous* impression of reality and life: life of individuals and of nations, birth, diseases, and death of empires. But by the breadth of the subjects treated and the importance of the questions discussed by him, Raleigh deserved the praise of Cromwell, who recommended thus to his son the work of the navigator: "It is a body of history and will add much more to your understanding than fragments of story."² Moreover, by the audacity of his views,³ Raleigh stood

¹ Book ii. chap. 14, vol. iv. p. 450; on the Romulus legends, book ii. chap. 24, section 5.

² Letter of April 2, 1650.

³ Conclusion of his treatise "The Sceptic," on the difficulty for the human mind of reaching any certitude: "I may then report how these things appear, but whether they are so indeed, I know not" (vol. viii. p. 556). This same treatise shows, it is true, how far from a real understanding of

connected with a philosophical movement destined to develop ceaselessly and be carried on from Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes, and Locke,¹ to the deists and sceptics of the eighteenth century.

IV.

Experience is so much a necessity of human life that nearly always, contrary to what one might imagine, theory is subsequent to practice; people act first, and then establish rules of conduct; *primum vivere, deinde philosophari*. When Boileau, when Pope wrote their Poetical Arts, they thought they were laying down laws for future poets, and they were only summing up the customs in use before they wrote; they thought themselves prophets and were only historians.

The Renaissance had put an end to the inconceivable misunderstanding which, out of that marvellous instrument of progress, the work of Aristotle, had made an instrument of death. That which, on the high road of learning, should have been a sign-post, had become a barrier. Aristotle had shown the way, and had given the means to outstrip his science by adding to it. His commentators and worshippers had declared that everything was contained in him, and that it was sacrilege to seek elsewhere. They had devoted entire lives and prodigious ingenuity to proving this, and, the better to honour the object of their idolatry, had done their best to render his doctrine fruitless.

They had very nearly succeeded; not quite. As early

the experimental method people still were; many of Raleigh's statements on matters of natural history, given by him as averred facts, would seem rather to be borrowed from Lyly's mythology of animals and plants.

¹ Herbert of Cherbury's "De Veritate" was published in 1624, Hobbes's "Leviathan" in 1651, Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding" in 1690.

as the Middle Ages, a few rare minds had revolted ; experience, besides, is so necessary to man that, in practice, unable to do otherwise, people had continued to experiment, to observe, to discover ; but they were going haphazard, with less confidence and success than should have been. Most of them made experiments without knowing it, as Monsieur Jourdain did prose, and as Raleigh's milkmaid did her cheeses ; they made discoveries by chance and in spite of themselves. Too many facts were held as certain, indisputable and sacred, and were still long to remain so ; no one dared either to contest or verify them : the master had said it, a master had said it, some one had said it. . . . Hearsays had become articles of scientific faith. The generality of thinkers, and, in their wake, the generality of men, accepted such laws ; they deducted from premises erroneous, and held as indisputable, logical consequences false still ; and thus swelled, from century to century, the patrimony of errors passed into axioms which were the pride of humanity.

It was, as we have seen, one of the most memorable effects of the Renaissance to break these ancient hieratic moulds and to resume the onward march. The great men of the time showed that the best way to honour the master was not to adore, but to imitate him.¹

One of the most complete geniuses of the day, and one of the best representatives of the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, had early and publicly declared in favour of experimental methods and against the unpardonable abuse of the "*Magister dixit*," that is, the principle of authority. "If I cannot," he said, referring to the blind sectators of antiquity, "quote authors, I will

¹ The movement of reaction against Aristotle was, as is common in like cases, carried to excess by some, and chiefly by the famous La Ramée (Ramus) in his "*Animadversiones in dialecticam Aristotelis, Libri xx*," Paris, 1543.

invoke a thing far higher, far worthier, invoking experience, the mistress of their masters." ¹ Copernicus had dared to test the system of the universe, up to then admitted by all, and to declare it false. Merely following the current, and without being by profession a physician, Sir Thomas Elyot, author of the "Governour," had written his "Castel of Helth," to show the necessity of taking more into account, in the preparation of remedies, "the true informacion of the sicke man." ² As early as 1535, Gilles d'Albi, the "father of French zoology," declared that he had drawn much from the ancients, but much also from experience, "non pauca experti sumus"; ³ and he concluded his Topography of Constantinople with the statement that he agreed with the Platonicians, according to whom "there is no limit to the search for truth, except the finding of it." ⁴ Realdo Colombo, Vesale's successor at Padua, had discovered pulmonary circulation, ⁵ preparing the way for the illustrious William Harvey, who broadened the question and solved it by his discovery of the general circulation of the blood in the human body. Harvey made that discovery about 1616, taught it in his lectures, and finally published it

¹ "Léonard de Vinci . . . Essai de biographie psychologique," by Gabriel Séailles, 1892, pp. 189 ff.

² "The Castel of Helth," 1st ed. 1534; cf. *supra*, vol. II. p. 66.

³ "Ex Æliani Historia, per Petrum Gyllium Latini facti . . . Libri xvi." Lyons, 1535, 4to. E. T. Hamy, "Pierre Gilles d'Albi," Toulouse, 1900, p. 15.

⁴ This notion sustained him in his task: "Sive constantiæ causa, sive rei honestas ad ea me impulit, confirmato Platoniorum judicio tradentium nullum esse modum vestigandi veri, nisi inveneris."—"De Topographia Constantinopoleos," Lyons, 1561, 4to.

⁵ Colombo published only in 1559 the treatise on anatomy in which he recorded his discovery, but his oral teachings had already made it known, and it is probably from him that Michel Servet drew the account of this theory which he incidentally gives in his "Christianismi Restitutio," 1559. See Dastre: "Les trois époques d'une Découverte scientifique," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, August 1, 1884.

in his treatise on the movement of the heart and blood in animals in 1628.¹ Numerous experiments had led him to his conclusions: "I have pursued diligent researches, internally examining, time and again, varied and numerous live animals, comparing many observations."²

The time had now come for the drawing up of theories in accord with such fecund practice; the task was fulfilled masterfully, with that dignity which commands respect, by Francis Bacon.

The philosopher was born on the 22nd of January, 1561, at York House, London. He was the younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, for twenty years Lord keeper of the great seal under Elizabeth, and celebrated for his learning and for an eloquence recalling antique models.³ His mother was a daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke (who had been tutor to Edward VI.) and a sister of Lady Cecil; Bacon was therefore a nephew by marriage of Elizabeth's great minister.

Very young he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, then studied law in London; he started for France in 1576, attached to the British ambassador, and returned three years later, at the news of his father's death, which left him in an embarrassed situation of fortune. Already used to a luxurious style of living, his mind occupied

¹ "Exercitatio anatomica de Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in animalibus, Guilielmi Harvei Angli, medici regii, et professoris anatomiae in Collegio Medicorum Londinensi," Francfort, 1628, 4to, a few plates. He mentions in his preface his previous teachings: "Meam de motu et usu cordis et circuitu sanguinis . . . sententiam . . . antea sæpius in prælectionibus meis Anatomicis aperui novam . . ."

² " . . . Et disquisitione et diligentia usus, multa frequenter et varia animalia viva introspeciendo, multis observationibus collatis . . ." (pp. 20, 21).

³ " . . . I have come to the Lord keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and found him sitting in his gallery alone with the works of Quintilian before him; indeed he was a most eloquent man."—"Arte of English Poesie," 1589, by, almost surely, Puttenham, Arber's reprint, p. 151.

with problems more interesting than that of making both ends meet, and quite incapable besides of limiting his expenses, he got from that moment into debt, and remained so, uninterruptedly, till his death forty-seven years later. Pensions, gifts, high salaries were of no avail; he continued living beyond his means, and even became acquainted, at one time, with the debtors' prison.

On his return from France, he devotes himself to politics and the law. He is, thanks no doubt to his uncle, elected to Parliament, and is for a long while a member of the House, where he is more and more looked up to, admired, and respected. "No man," said Ben Jonson, "ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness in what he uttered. . . . His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss. . . . The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end."¹

He assigns to himself thenceforth two connected tasks : to rise in the world, and to be of service to the kingdom and to humanity. He devotes to the one and the other an equal activity and the resources of an ample genius. The ardour of pursuit is so great that it is not possible for him to conceal the means he employs. His treatises, his letters of advice to the great, summaries of his speeches, plenty of contemporaneous testimony, not to speak of his fundamental works, exist and permit one to judge with certainty this great mind, who was not a great character. From his lack of character came his errors and his fall, and those meaner sides of his nature which vitiate the wisdom of his profoundest political views.

Bacon was, before all, sharp-sighted : neither the refined scruples of delicate consciences, nor the impulsive

¹ "Timber, or Discoveries," lxxi, "Dominus Verulamius."

movements of generous, romantic, passionate natures would ever blind him as to the object to be attained or the road to be followed. His head and his heart remained cool ; he weighed chances, possibilities, utilities without his pulse ever beating any quicker ; neither poetry, nor beauty, nor the tragic spectacle of the catastrophe befalling the friend and protector of yesterday, ever troubled the serenity of his judgment. If ever he made a mistake, it is because, for once, his reason may have been at fault and not because emotion blinded him.

But to believe that, in human affairs, everything can be calculated, is to calculate ill ; sentiment, love and sympathy are forces imponderable but real, which politicians like Bacon do not sufficiently take into account ; and their career suffers delays or ends in disasters that fill them with stupefaction. How could an algebraic equation deceive them ? They had forgotten a coefficient.

Bacon never wanders from the tangible, the accessible and the calculable ; even when he has to please a sovereign, a woman, he does not suspect that there may be charms more powerful than his ingenious devices ; he does not perceive that his nicest niceties are heavy, clumsy machines compared with the smile of an Essex. His merit is universally admired ; he is related to the highest in the realm ; his counsels are full of recognised wisdom ; and yet his fortune progresses very slowly. He has the best theories in the world for pleasing, but does not please ; he only half pleases ; his ideas are deemed interesting, but not his person. In 1595, already renowned for his speeches, for the part he plays in Parliament, for his political and juridical knowledge, he writes to Fulke Greville : " For to be, as I told you, like a child following a bird, which when he is nearest flieth away and lighteth a little before,

and then the child after it again, and so *ad infinitum*, I am weary of it; as also of wearying my good friends.”¹ He misjudged his force of endurance, and much more wearying was in store for him and his friends.

The problem of how to govern the kingdom is foremost in his thoughts; he has, on each of the main questions of the day, fixed ideas, all the result of calculations so minute and accurate that it happened to him more than once to speak prophetically, but they are only calculations. If he advises clemency, it is out of policy, not out of generosity; if he recommends rigour, it is from policy, not from hatred of vice.² The dream of his whole life would have been to become the intimate and trusted adviser of the sovereign, and by this means to apply his ideas on the government of England; he was frequently able to make them be understood and even admired, but never to have them put in practice; he was able to obtain, at length, recompenses and high appointments, never to win the personal confidence and favour that alone would have allowed the realisation of his schemes. There always lacked in his words, in his political coun-

¹ Probable date, May, 1595. Spedding, “Letters and Life of F. Bacon, including all his Occasional Works,” London, 1861, ff., 7 vols., vol. i. p. 359.

² Many measures, very liberal for the time, were defended by him: on the Catholics, the Irish, the poor, the suppression of those *enclosures* so eloquently denounced by More in his “Utopia.” He points out the depopulation resulting from this latter abuse: “. . . Jam seges est ubi Troja fuit; so in England, instead of a whole town full of people, none but green fields, but a shepherd and a dog.”—Speech to Parliament, 1597, “Letters,” ii. p. 82. He dreams of a court of arbitration to settle differences between Christian princes, something like the Hague tribunal founded in our days by Nicholas II.: “Also that . . . there will be erected a tribunal or prætorian power to decide controversies which may arise amongst the princes and estates of Christendom without effusion of Christian blood.”—“To the King,” March 23, 161[7]; “Letters,” vol. vi. p. 157.

sels, that degree of warmth, that touch of enthusiasm, which begets sympathy and melts hearts: a wrong calculation after all to be only a calculator.

Long influential in Parliament, he did not commit the mistake, into which lesser minds would have fallen, of believing that institution to be the central force of the kingdom: it was no longer so in his day; the centre of power was the sovereign, it was on him that one must act, either directly or through his favourites. In letters, treatises, reports, Bacon lavishes his advice on Elizabeth, then on James; he hopes to win them over by his cool sagacity, to the advantage of his own self and of the kingdom. The first of his writings "*ad usum reginæ*" is of 1584, and its object is to solve the most difficult problem of the time: the religious question and the relations with the Catholics. Clearly, calmly, as coldly as if it had been a mathematical theorem, without the slightest trace of generosity, and out of sheer policy, he recommends some degree of tolerance. The Catholics are powerful and discontented, and "what the mixture of strength and discontentment engenders needs no syllogisms to prove." They must be weakened, but not reduced to despair: "Though they must be discontented, yet I would not have them desperate: for among many desperate men it is like some one will bring forth a desperate attempt."¹

Essex's fortunes rise. Bacon follows him step by step and lavishes counsels so sage that their bestowal on a personage so little master of himself has something comical. How could that great thinker, that great observer, that pro-

¹ "Letters," i. 47. The authenticity, which has been contested, is considered as certain by no less a judge than Mr. Gardiner. Bacon addressed later to James I. "Considerations" on the religious question in which he recommends him to act as a "moderator" between parties: "Others speak as if their scope were only to set forth what is good, and not to seek forth what is possible, which is to wish and not to propound," 1603; *ibid.*, iii. 104.

found philosopher, imagine that he would be able to make a man of such ambitions, of such irrepressible impetuosity, accept the greater and lesser rules of his methodical wisdom? Once more Bacon was falling into his old mistake and holding as negligible what was not amenable to calculation.

The Queen must be won over, writes the philosophical magister to the courtier, that is the point, the rest is of no importance: "I said to your lordship last time, *Martha, Martha, attendis ad plurima, unum sufficit* ; win the Queen ; if this be not the beginning, of any other course I see no end." And to win her, what must be done? The thinker has excellent recipes, and never suspecting that Essex may have still better ones, which will have cost him less reflection, he advises him to pretend to care for things that Elizabeth does not like, so as to have an occasion for pretending to give them up in order to please her ; he should feign a desire to travel, which will alarm Elizabeth, and feign to renounce it, which will reassure her. Let him endeavour to charm rather as a statesman than as a soldier (and if Bacon in this demanded of the favourite an impossibility, at least his clear-sightedness served him, and he spoke as a prophet) ; instead of wanting to be Master of the ordnance, let him rather aspire to become Lord privy seal and leave military glory alone ; the Queen loves peace and hates expense ; a favourite who dreams only of martial feats and battles will be a cause of anxiety to her. Take heed of your popularity, which will end by giving her umbrage : "The only way is to quench it *verbis*, not *rebus*. And therefore to take all occasions to the Queen to speak against popularity and popular courses vehemently ; and to tax it in all others : but nevertheless to go on in your honourable commonwealth courses as you do." ¹

¹ October 4, 1596 ; "Letters," vol. ii. pp. 40 ff.

Cunning's labour's lost. Essex became Master of the ordnance, started on fresh expeditions, increased his noisy popularity: and the whirlwind swept away Essex in his turn. So long as there was the least chance of saving him, Bacon remained faithful and bestowed upon him his political and legal advice. When it became evident that Essex was lost, Bacon, without the slightest heart-beat, made his calculation and concluded that it would be of the utterest puerility, and quite unphilosophical, not only to foolishly risk a common fall, but even not to turn to use that quasi-corpse, half insensible already. In politics, he thought, one cannot take too much care not to waste anything. He intervened therefore in the trial, repaired the bungling of Coke, his rival, and delivered two remarkable speeches which convinced everyone of Essex's guilt;¹ the guilt was certain, but the evidence meagre; Bacon, to whom, with others, the care of investigating the case had been entrusted, put order, logic and light into the affair, and his protector was thereupon condemned and executed. The public was indignant with Bacon, and he was astounded at this indignation. What does sentiment, he thought, have to do with human affairs? they must be conducted according to calculation.²

James ascends the throne, and Bacon resumes his game, more convinced than ever of the final success of his infallible martingale: advances to the king's Scottish physician, whom he most appropriately remembers having

¹ Summed up in "Letters," vol. ii. pp. 224, 229.

² Public opinion declared itself against him with such vehemence that, in order to conciliate it, he published an "Apologie" of his conduct, 1604 (text in "Letters," iii. 169). Public opinion was one of the forces of which he made most account—"Opinio veritate major," he had written to Essex—but, here again, he committed his usual error of believing that the logic of well deducted reasonings sufficed to convince the minds of all.

formerly known,¹ treatises, letters, political manuals for the use of the prince, with the customary and indispensable accompaniment of unrestrained flattery, all in the hope of becoming his intimate adviser and of making him apply his policy; adulation of James' successive favourites, Somerset, then Buckingham; nothing is omitted. Bacon offered the first Stuart practical counsels, of a wisdom demonstrated by after events. Of English statesmen, he was perhaps the earliest to comprehend that the great difficulty was now going to be the establishment of possible relations between the king and the Commons, between the king and the religious parties. He is hostile to radicals of all kinds who have "rather a mind of removing than of reforming"; he declares himself in favour of bishops, whose hierarchy is "much more convenient for kingdoms than parity of ministers and government by synods." The king holds, to be sure, his sovereign power "immediately from God,"² but he should try to live in good harmony with the Commons and, without giving up any particle of his power, never fail to make the motives of his decrees well understood.

Nothing so easy to foresee as the moves of a calculator; to know the circumstances is to know what he will do; his heart cannot lead him astray. As under Elizabeth, Bacon formulated the best of advice; as under Elizabeth, it was understood, admired, and not followed. His knowledge and foresight were recognised by the sovereign, who held him, as his predecessor had done, at a distance, and declined to make of him his daily adviser. The same

¹ "To renew the ancient acquaintance which hath passed between us." Letter "to Dr. Morrison, a Scottish physician, upon his Majesty's coming in," iii. p. 66. Letters to divers others, to the king himself; projects for proclamations, various treatises to let the new sovereign see all their author can do.

² "Certain Considerations," in "Letters," iii. 104, and note on the king and "his prerogatives," 1607, iii. 371, ff.

with the favourites : when Somerset solemnised his shameful marriage, Bacon spent over two thousand pounds to offer him a masque ;¹ at the fall of the courtier, proved to be an accomplice in Overbury's murder, Bacon was chief prosecutor, and, thanks to his oratorical gifts and to his legal knowledge, ensured his protector's condemnation. The same, too, for what concerned his own self ; the philosopher lavished upon himself, as before, counsels just like those which he bestowed upon the royal favourites. Those rules of conduct which he recommended to himself were those he had followed all his life, and yet he was so afraid of forgetting them that he put them down in writing, so as to have them always before his eyes. It would have been too humiliating, being a calculator, to lose sight of one of the terms of his equation, to risk perhaps a spontaneous movement ; one must reflect and not improvise. He collected therefore, for his own use, his best recipes for pleasing and succeeding ; he noted, for instance, on sheets that he called "the Handmaids of his memory"—"Ancill[æ] memoriæ"—the objurgation "to have ever in readiness matter to minister taulk with every of the great counsellors respectivè, bothe to induce familiarity and for countenance in publike place."² This is indeed the same Bacon, the lover of artificial ornamentation, who made a garden gay by means of birds in cages hung from the trees.

At length, very slowly, after innumerable solicitations, rebuffs and protracted waiting, he ended by attaining honours and promotions. Knighted (with three hundred others) at the accession of James, he had been appointed a few years later Solicitor-general, then Attorney-general

¹ Letter from Chamberlain, *ibid.*, iv. p. 394.

² Only one of the numerous notebooks that he wrote thus, but which he destroyed, has come down to us ; it includes but seven days : July 25-31, 1608. The title was : "Commentarius solutus, sive Pandecta, sive Ancilla memoriæ," "Letters," iv. p. 39.

in 1605, finally Lord chancellor in 1618; he was created Lord Verulam the same year.

His "Advancement of Learning," which had come out in 1605, had increased his celebrity; he reached the zenith of his fame in 1620 by the publication of his principal work, the "*Novum Organum*." On January 27, 1621, he was made Viscount Saint-Albans; on the 30th, the Commons met: the hour of his fall was near.

Placed at the head of the English magistracy, Bacon had displayed, in the fulfilment of his task, his wonderful lucidity, his activity and his learning; he had promptly disposed of enormous arrears of work and had, as a rule, rendered fair justice, in spite of the incessant interventions of his new protector, Buckingham, the favourite of the hour.¹ In the House, he scarcely counted any friends now, and the House, displeased with the king and his courtiers, was on the look-out for a victim. Coke, Bacon's unsuccessful and embittered rival, was a member of it. Suddenly a charge of bribery was brought against the chancellor by some obscure individual; another followed, then another, then a number of them. The corrupters had certainly offered to Bacon, while their cases were pending, sums that he had accepted, but in spite of which, be it said, he had usually at once condemned them. The fault was none the less certain. The Commons' animosity, the chancellor's unpopularity, did the rest; he himself speedily understood that resistance was impossible; he had at first thought of justifying himself, he gave up the idea: "I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and do renounce all defence."² The great seal

¹ Who generally employed the hypocritical formula usual in such cases: "My desire . . . is that you would shew the said John Huddy what favour you lawfully may and as his cause will bear when it cometh before you, for my sake."—January 28, 1617, vol. vi. p. 297.

² "The confession and humble submission of me, the Lord Chancellor," April 30, 1621; "Letters," vol. vii. p. 261. He had first pleaded not guilty

was taken from him ; he was deprived of his high offices, condemned to pay a heavy fine, to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure. He was left only four days in the Tower, but was exiled from court.

He languished for some years, always hoping to be re-employed ; meanwhile he finished his history of Henry VII. and resumed his great inquiry on natural phenomena. His last experience cost him his life. In winter, being at Highgate, he went out to fill with snow a freshly killed chicken, in order to verify how the lowering of the temperature would preserve the meat ; he caught cold and died on April 9, 1626, after having recommended his memory "to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations, and the next ages."

He left a considerable work, valuable and deceptive, streaked with bright light and dark shadows, comprising orchards full of fruit, barren moors, and gardens offering only paper flowers and artificial ornaments. Part of this work was historical, and the "Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh" is its principal monument ; part was literary and comprised notably the "Essays" ; finally, part was political, theological,¹ and above all philosophical ; it is that to which he owes his immense fame.²

in a letter to the Lords, March 9, 1620. A significant speech of James I. to the Star Chamber, in 1616, discouraged plaintiffs involved in lawsuits from appealing to him, except in one case : "Therefore as you come gaping to the law for justice, so bee satisfied and contented when judgement is past against you, and trouble not mee, but if you finde briberie or corruption, then come boldly."—"Workes [of James I.], 1616, p. 561.

¹ Various treatises, a verse "Translation of certaine Psalmes," dedicated to George Herbert, the poet, a "Confession of Faith," etc., in vol. vii. of "Works."

² "Works," ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath, London, 1889, 7 vols. (French edition : "Œuvres philosophiques," with notes by N. Bouillet, Paris, 1834, 3 vols.); to which must be added the "Letters," ed. Spedding, 1861, 7 vols., and "Promus of Formularies and Elegancies . circa 1594," a collection of formulas, proverbs, etc., ed. by Mrs. Pott, London, 1883, with numerous comparisons of the most hazardous kind, to sustain the indefensible theory according to which Bacon would, in hypothetical moments of leisure, forgetting then

From his youth Bacon had dreamed of being useful to mankind, by improving their methods in the search of truth. Logical, observing and circumspect, he was struck by the quantity of fables still admitted in his day, without control, in spite of the teachings and examples of the thinkers of the Renaissance ; he grieved at the number of sources of error held to be sources of wisdom, to which generation after generation came, full of respect and confidence, to drink deep of falsehood. To put in the hands of seekers an infallible instrument of verification, to enlighten them as to what is but a vain semblance, to show them the ruts and precipices to be avoided, to clear for them the road to learning, was for Bacon the centre of all the thoughts which daily politics and the care of his own fortune did not absorb. This preoccupation reappears everywhere in his work, even in his literary or historical writings, even in the least fragments scribbled haphazard, abandoned, taken up again, incorporated into a regular treatise or left as they were, in a corner, like trial sketches in a painter's studio.

The entire work remains fragmentary, obscure and contradictory. It consists chiefly of two writings ; one, an occasional piece, drawn up shortly after the king's accession, in order to please that learned prince and secure his interest, and thereby everybody else's, in the grand enterprise ; the other, only a fragment of the vast systematical account of his doctrine planned by Bacon, the fragment itself being, however, incomplete.

The first of these works, begun in 1603, came out in English in 1605, under the title of "Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon. Of the proficience and advancement of Learning, divine and humane." ¹ A Latin translation, done under his

all he knew of history and geography, have secretly written, to amuse himself and mystify posterity, the dramas of the one of all his contemporaries with whom he had least in common, to wit, Shakespeare.

¹ London, 1605, 4to ; "Works," vol. iii. Dedication to the king : "Why should a few received authors stand up like Hercules's columns, beyond which

direction, with many changes and additions, was published by him in 1623 : "De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum libr[i] ix." It is a regular defence of instruction, with a first statement of the laws to be observed in order to avoid error and to proceed methodically, and science by science, to the great inventory of human knowledge. Bacon enumerates all the objections raised against the diffusion of learning and refutes them with the help of many quotations and examples. It is said that learning urges one to atheism : a little learning does ; much learning brings one back to religion. It is said that "learning doth soften men's minds ;" but remember "that pair, Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar the dictator ; whereof the one was Aristotle's scholar in philosophy, and the other was Cicero's rival in eloquence." Care must be taken, however, not to confuse truth and falsehood, not to accept as certain what is doubtful. And thereupon he proceeds to a first enumeration of the "distempers of learning," or faults in scientific research, going even into sub-distempers, mere indispositions and "humeurs peccantes," as Molière's physicians will say—"Rather peccant humours than formed diseases," writes Bacon. A first distemper consists in men's studying "words and not matter" ; a second in remaining with one's eyes fixed on the pages of Aristotle, full of "wisdom and integrity" though the great man was : "As water will not ascend higher than the level of the first spring-head from whence it descendeth, so knowledge derived from Aristotle and exempted from liberty of examination, will not rise again higher than the knowledge of Aristotle." The mistake of the schoolmen of former days was to expect too much from their own meditations, without taking sufficiently into account exterior phenomena : "The wit and mind of man . . . if it work upon

there should be no sailing or discovering, since we have so bright and benign a star as your Majesty to conduct and prosper us ? "

itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit."

Bacon demonstrates the advantages of true learning, and goes back, as people so readily did in those days, to the beginning of things and to the times before the flood and even before creation. In one of those comparisons, full of grandeur, to which he often has recourse and which count among the finest in the language, he exclaims: "If the invention of the ship was thought so noble, which carrieth riches and commodities from place to place and consociateth the most remote regions in participation of their fruits, how much more are letters to be magnified, which, as ships, pass through the vast seas of time and make ages so distant to participate of the wisdom, illuminations and inventions the one of the other!" He then draws the immense picture of what, according to his views, men should learn, and which is divided into three great categories: history, poetry, philosophy, corresponding to the faculties of memory, imagination, and reason. Men ought to know themselves, past and present, body and soul; the researches of physicians are too limited, they are lacking in experimental knowledge, they might render far greater services; why do they neglect vivisection, which, by the phenomena observed in animals, would reveal what is taking place in man? Why, when they cannot cure, do they not seek to alleviate suffering? ¹ Why do they not fabricate artificial mineral waters, which it would be so easy and so useful to do? The formation and tempering of character should be ensured from childhood by the application of just rules, of which Bacon gives

¹ Note, however, that laudanum was already in use. Manningham writes in his diary: "There is a certain kinde of compound called *laudanum* which may be had at Dr. Turner's, apothecary in Bishopsgate Streete; the virtue of it is very soveraigne to mitigate anie payne. . . . Dr. Parry told me he tryed it in a fever, and his sister Mrs. Turner in her childbirth."—"Diary, 1602-3"; Camden Society, p. 46.

the formula. The art of reasoning must be reformed ; the misuse of syllogisms (unverified premises) has distorted it. Everything helps towards everything ; a mathematician must not disdain poetry ; a poet should not neglect mathematics. "Tennis is a game of no use in itself, but of great use in respect it maketh a quick eye and a body ready to put itself into all postures ; so in the mathematics, that use which is collateral and intervenient is no less worthy than that which is principal and intended." In this will be recognised the reduction to a system of the views held in honour by the Renaissance, concerning the importance of men being complete men, with lights on all arts and all sciences ; manuals of education, both the serious ones and the comic, the counsels of Rabelais and those of Elyot had propagated these views. A master philosopher now transformed those counsels and aspirations into axioms.

Poetry is not the least useful "part of learning" ; that inconstant and intangible art, which shines and goes out, waxes and wanes, and "cometh of the lust of the earth, without a formal seed," has on man a manifold action : it illumines the soul, sheds light on passions, corrects manners. But, with his classic tastes, Bacon is not very pleased with the poetry of his time : "I am of opinion that it is long since the [Muses'] rites were duly celebrated." And in a passage that he adds to his Latin text, in 1623, the very year when the first edition of Shakespeare's works appeared, he states that dramatic art, in particular, is at its lowest ebb : it is but corruption, vain farce or personal satire ; and nothing is more unfortunate, for the stage might be a school ; it was so in the days of its glory—with the ancients.¹

¹ "Non parva enim esse posset theatri et disciplina et corruptela. Atque corruptelarum in hoc genere abunde est ; disciplina plane nostris temporibus est neglecta. Attamen licet in rebus publicis modernis habeatur pro re ludicra

To learn is the real object of life, and humanity's noblest task; all pleasures cloy, save this: "And therefore we see that voluptuous men turn friars and ambitious princes turn melancholy. But of knowledge there is no satiety.'

Bacon's great work was to be his "Instauratio Magna," written in Latin, and which he was no more destined to finish than Spenser his "Faerie Queene." We are still in a period of colossal plans and projects; humanity had regained confidence in itself. Through Bacon as a connecting link, the "Encyclopédie" of the eighteenth century will continue this movement, and will prove a distant but incontestable resultant of the Renaissance. We possess, however, only the plan and a few fragments of the English philosopher's "Great Instauration."

Under picturesque titles, reminding one of those Ruskin was to make use of later, the work was intended to contain six parts: *Partitiones Scientiarum*; *Novum Organum*; *Phænomena Universi*; *Scala Intellectus*; *Prodromi*; *Philosophia secunda* (or active science). Of this last section, which was to be the crowning part of the work, and to show the application of the method, we possess nothing; of the fourth and fifth, we have only prefaces; of the section on phenomena, a few scattered essays: *Historia Ventorum*, *Historia Vitæ et Mortis*, *Historia Densi et Rari*, *Sylva Sylvarum*, etc. The second part alone was written,¹ even that is unfinished; it is the

actio theatralis, nisi orte nimium trahat e satira et mordeat; tamen apud antiquos curæ fuit, ut animos hominum ad virtutem institueret."—"De Augmentis," book ii. chap. xiii.

¹ Bacon declared, however, later, that he considered that his "Advancement of Learning," translated into Latin and increased under the name of "De Augmentis," could serve in lieu of the first part of the "Instauration" ("Works," i. 416), the which was to offer, as the starting-point for researches, a picture of the present state of sciences, and a general classification of them. Various other fragments remain, containing theories, accounts of experi-

famous "*Novum Organum*," or "true revelation for the interpretation of nature."¹

This method was that with which Bacon had never ceased to concern himself, to wit, the inductive or experimental method. But experiments had, after all, been tried, and induction had been practised by Aristotle. Bacon affirms that his system is entirely new and absolutely infallible; it is not the old induction, very faulty according to him, that he recommends, it is something quite different, something far more beautiful and more useful. What is it then? Here doubt begins. The doctrine is expounded at various places in the "*Novum Organum*," which remained unfinished, and which consists in series of numbered aphorisms, some mere maxims, others fully-developed dissertations;² it is found, too, not without contradictions, in fragmentary essays; it forms nowhere a complete whole. The terms at once picturesque and obscure (of which some have become proverbial), the words taken in a rather unusual sense, and moreover a variable one under Bacon's own pen, the classifications apparently rigorous and in reality arbitrary, cause fatigue and anxiety. Under those learned terms the philosopher affirms that there is something, some very great thing.

ments, philosophical considerations, often repetitions of each other, and that can hypothetically be connected with such or such a part of the great work.

¹ "*Francisci de Verulamio Instauratio magna. Pars secunda operis quæ dicitur Novum Organum, sive indicia vera de interpretatione Naturæ*," 1620, in "*Works*," vol. i. (in Latin); separate edition, with important introduction and notes by T. Fowler: "*Novum Organum*," Oxford, 2d. ed., 1889.

² One hundred and thirty aphorisms in the first book; fifty-two in the second. The main lines of the doctrine are thus expounded in aphorism iv. of book i.: "*Inductio quæ ad inventionem et demonstrationem scientiarum et artium erit utilis, naturam separare debet per rejectiones et exclusiones debitas; ac deinde post negativas tot quot sufficiunt super affirmativas concludere; quod adhuc factum non est, nec tentatum certe nisi tantummodo a Platone, qui ad excutiendas definitiones et ideas, hac certe forma inductionis aliquatenus utitur.*" But he will perfect the system by adding "*quamplurima . . . quæ adhuc nullius mortalium cogitationem subiere.*"

Could there, by any possibility, be nothing, or else only paradoxes, or commonplace truths? The pupil follows, with beating heart, the Master who goes forth, looking so grand, who stops, turns round, and advises patience; the promised land is further, a little further yet. But when at last, at the end of the race, he must show what he is leading us to, quote an example which will make everything clear,¹ the light goes out; the philosopher has been called elsewhere; he interrupts his work, and once more leaves it a fragment.

And yet the work was beneficial, and had considerable influence. Ellis has justly remarked that the spirit of the method, far more than the method itself, was useful.² All that Bacon had flattered himself he had added to the old experimental system, his complicated process of exclusions and rejections, all his own scholasticism, those "cobwebs of learning," as he had said of the philosophy of his predecessors, "admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit," all that was to be of no avail. But the substratum of wisdom and of good sense which underlies his "fineness" gave the work a durable value. Once again, and with more authority than ever, he thrust aside those images, those shadows, *idola mentis*, wrongly taken for realities, wrongly venerated, which had so long deceived scientific pioneers as to the road they should follow. He pleaded, with reason,

¹ He gives but a single one, his "Inquisitio de Forma Calidi," book ii., aphorisms xi and following. He admits himself that its mechanism halts and is unsatisfactory.

² On the method proper, on those new and complicated improvements by which Bacon flattered himself he would render the old process of experimenting and of induction infallible, the same Leslie Ellis, the very competent editor of Bacon, and a good judge in such matters, writes: "That his method is impracticable cannot I think be denied, if we reflect not only that it has never produced any result, but also that the process by which scientific truths have been established cannot be so presented as even to appear to be in accordance with it."—"Works," i. p. 38.

that everything should be submitted to experience and to observation, that the thinker should eschew hasty generalisations founded on one or two examples, and that other examples would perhaps contradict, that he should beware of traditional opinions. We must, he affirmed, undertake with patience and courage, fearing nothing and omitting nothing, a complete inventory of all perceptible facts, a great general inquiry on all the phenomena around us. We must hold none as certain, simply because every one admits it, neglect none, for all things are connected, no science can be studied separately, and the most insignificant of the details of daily occurrence is perhaps the one which will enable us to solve the most pregnant enigmas. For lack of a rigorous method, the work of the ancestors is of doubtful value, and must be begun all over again. The undertaking is colossal, and has a sacred character; Bacon knew it and proclaimed it: "*Restat unica salus ac sanitas ut opus mentis universum de integro resumatur.*"¹

The examples he left, as often happens, were not so good as his advice. He wanted to contribute personally, as much as was in his power, to the great inquiry to which he had summoned mankind; but he made poor use of his own methods; he sought, and, alas! found, the cause of facts which were not facts, but fables.² He had not allotted in his system a sufficient place for hypothesis. Imagination which conceives hypo-

¹ Preface to the "*Novum Organum*"; "*Works*," i. p. 152.

² Many such cases, in his "*Sylva Sylvarum*" (in English), being notes on experiments, published after his death by his faithful chaplain and collaborator, Rawley. See, for example, his "experiment solitary touching the making vines more fruitful.—It is reported of credit that . . ." (here a fable). "The cause may be" . . . (here an idle hypothesis); the whole being the very reverse of a sound application of the experimental method. —"*Works*," vol. ii. p. 354.

theses is no less useful for the progress of science than reason which controls facts; the equilibrium of these faculties has given to science its greatest men: we owe as much to Pasteur's hypotheses as to his experiments. But Bacon, contradicting in practice his own axioms, not only made use of hypothesis, but took vague suppositions for averred truths, built upon those fragile foundations, in short, fell back into the pseudo-scientific mythology of the Middle Ages.

At least, however, he always preserved his reverence for the great task, the notion of his own deficiencies, and the desire that everyone should contribute to the work. He had even suggested closer intercourse, from country to country, between learned bodies—in those days, Universities—and the quite recent organisation of our inter-academical congresses is, like the creation of the Hague Tribunal, a tardy realisation of one of Bacon's cherished wishes.¹ He wanted still more: his desire would have been that the search for the secrets of nature, that inventions and experiments should be the first care of well-ordered states, and in the fancy republic which, in his turn, he organised at Bensalem, an imaginary island of the south sea, whose inhabitants had every virtue, the chief institution was a "Solomon's house," or academy, having for sole object the realisation of Bacon's plan.² Very inferior to More, of whom he has neither the

¹ "The proficience of learning would be yet more advanced . . . if there were more intelligence mutual between the Universities of Europe than now there is"—"Advancement," "Works," vol. iii. p. 327. Note, too, his appeals to all his serious-minded friends, inviting their help in the great inquiry: characteristic letter of Wotton's, replying to an appeal of this kind, and telling him about his interview at Linz with "M. Keplar." Kepler had shown him a surprising invention allowing one to draw a landscape and place everything at its proper distance with mathematical precision, of capital use for "chorography"; it was the camera obscura.—"Reliquiæ Wottonianæ," 4th ed., 1685, p. 299.

² "New Atlantis," in English, composed in 1624, and, like most of his

humour, nor the variety of tone, nor the faculty of making his dreams look like realities, he is touching by the very persistence with which he pleads, in every way and on all occasions, in Latin or English, under the form of treatises, under the form of fiction, for the progress of sciences and the knowledge of nature, by means of enlightened research and of experimentation.

If ever his heart warmed, it was in his pleadings in favour of scientific progress; moved himself, he could move others; convinced,¹ eloquent, he won the confidence of others. He, so proud and so sure of himself, feels humble in presence of the immense task. In one of those casual essays, or possible prefaces, in which he early stated his views, he speaks of his method, and says: "I hold it enough to have constructed the machine, though I may not succeed in setting it on work. Nay, with the same candour, I profess and declare that the interpretation of nature, rightly conducted, ought in the first steps in the ascent, until a certain stage of generals be reached, to be kept clear of all applications to works. And this has, in fact, been the error of all those who have ventured themselves at all upon the waves of experience—that being either too weak of purpose or too eager for display, they have all at the outset sought prematurely for

works, left unfinished; published by Rawley in 1627; it was meant to form a sort of appendix to the "*Sylva Sylvarum*." Why the academy at Bensalem had been founded is thus explained: "The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of the Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible" ("*Works*," iii. p. 156). In the division of labour between the members of this institution Bacon's rather puerile taste for excessive classification reappears. The list of imaginary inventions supposed to have been made by the Bensalem learned men is curious; many have been realised since.

¹ "I cannot but be raised to this persuasion that this period of time will far surpass that of the Græcian and Roman learning"; we have leisure, peace, printing, "the openness of the world by navigation which hath disclosed multitudes of experiments and a mass of natural history."—"Advancement," in "*Works*," iii. 476.

works, as proofs and pledges of their progress, and upon that rock have been wrecked and cast away."¹

He had modestly said elsewhere: "This writing seemeth to me, as far as man can judge of his own work, not much better than the noise or sound which musicians make while they are tuning their instruments; which is nothing pleasant to hear, but yet is a cause why the music is sweeter afterwards. So I have been content to tune the instruments of the Muses, that they may play that have better hands."²

His eloquent pleadings were not flawless, but they won the case; it became more and more difficult to go backwards, to confound facts and dreams, demonstrable truths and doubtful hypotheses; if the complicated mechanism that he wished to superpose on the ancient experimental system was useless, he had at least the merit of making the recourse to experience more general. The event thus justified the emblem and epigraph on the title-page of the "Great Instauration," a vessel passing the columns of Hercules, with the motto: "Multi pertransibunt et augebitur scientia."

Bacon was, after More, the second Englishman as famous on the continent as in his own country. The French philosophers of the eighteenth century, who were to have, in their turn, so great an influence on humanity, declared themselves his pupils. The "Novum Organum," said Voltaire, "is the scaffolding with which the new philosophy was built, and when the edifice had been erected, at least in part, the scaffolding ceased to be of any use. The Chancellor Bacon did not yet know nature, but he knew and pointed out all the roads that lead to her."³

¹ About 1603, "Letters," vol. iii. p. 83.

² Conclusion of the "Advancement of Learning"; "Works," vol. iii. p. 472.

³ "Lettres sur les Anglais," xii.

And in the Preliminary Discourse at the beginning of the "Encyclopédie," d'Alembert wrote : "Bacon is the great man whom we here acknowledge for our master."

V.

In politics and religion, as well as in literature, the Elizabethan period was continuing, but November now had succeeded to June.

The same parties were arrayed against each other ; none believed itself vanquished nor had given up the fight. All kept the hope of triumphing one day, perhaps by persuasion, perhaps by violence, perhaps by a gunpowder plot, perhaps by a civil war and a revolution. Excluded from power under Elizabeth, the Catholics and the Puritans, while still execrating each other, were of one mind as regards the desirability of ruining that illogical but practical institution, that recent creation, made up of compromise, which had in its favour neither the venerable antiquity of the Church of Rome nor the inaccessible ideal of the puritan groups : the Church of England.

The Anglican Church, that *ens* of reason, naturally continued to have as its partisans reasonable minds, and the friends of order and of regularly constituted hierarchies. Privileged, alone endowed with a legal existence, it was upheld too, no less naturally, by its own dignitaries : archbishops, bishops, deans, canons, etc., who left many sermons and pious treatises in which abound fine, eloquent passages, but also pedantic quotations, conceits in the worst taste, and sour diatribes against adversaries, right and left. In the front rank among these dignitaries, the dean of St. Paul's, John Donne, famous once as a licentious poet and now as a convinced preacher. He wears himself out preaching ; the great sceptic of former days has become a sincere apostle, of untiring zeal. In the twilight of life,

his heart has grown calmer, his mind gloomier ;¹ clear, logical, sensible, he abounds in practical advice, given in a picturesque language that makes it unforgettable ; he meditates, like Hamlet, like Raleigh, on the hereafter : "The sun is setting to thee, and that for ever ; thy houses and furniture, thy gardens and orchards, thy titles and offices, thy wife and children are departing from thee, and that for ever." What becomes of the dust of kings and of clowns ? Such a one who thought to rest in peace will be "mingled in his dust with the dust of every highway and of every dunghill, and swallowed in every puddle and pond." The orator cannot stop ; enamoured of the picturesque, he himself rolls into the puddle and pond of the most horrible bad taste, enticed by his natural tendencies and encouraged by the applause of connoisseurs.²

Bad taste excited admiration ; as always in periods when it flourishes, it passed for refined wit ; associated with pedantry, it assured the reputation of an orator. Lancelot Andrewes, dean of Westminster, then bishop of Chichester, of Ely, of Winchester, one of the most learned men of his time and one of the main contributors to the so-called "authorised" version of the Bible, enjoyed high repute ; the king appointed him one of his privy counsellors and ordered the publication of ninety-six of his sermons ; he was proclaimed "the star of preachers" : a

¹ The phenomenon is particularly marked from the accession of James I. on ; he had not yet taken orders, and did so only twelve years later, but he began to write serious poems, "Holy Sonnets" ; he tried his hand at religious controversy, in his "Pseudo Martyr," 1610 ; finally he took orders in 1615. See above p. 464 and vol. II. p. 420. "Works," ed. Alford, London, 1839, 6 vols. 8vo.

² "Miserable riddle when the same worm must be my mother and my sister and myself. Miserable incest when I must be married to my own mother and sister, and be both father and mother to mine own mother and sister," etc., etc. Sermon at Whitehall, before the King, 1630 (Donne's last sermon) ; "Works," vol. vi. p. 287.

shooting star, that did not shine long. It seems incredible that people could have admired, or even only listened to, such painful successions of puns, jokes, conceits, word-jugglings, unexpected quotations with endless developments on each word, on the word that is in the quotation, and the word that is not, on the one that might have been there, but has been excluded, and I am going to tell you why. Never did the salon of "Arthénice," nor later even that of "Sapho" (Mlle. de Scudéry), hear anything so extravagant. Let anyone who may wish to form an opinion on a style which no description can give an adequate idea of, take Andrewes' commentary on the words "*non erant vires*," in the eighth sermon on the Gunpowder Plot. The interpretation is subtle, indecent, jocose, and above all interminable; it seems as though a conjurer were indefinitely drawing ridiculous, useless, and cumbersome articles from an empty hat; and we are in a church and a prelate is in the pulpit.¹

¹ The text of the sermon was: "Venerunt filii usque ad partum, et vires non erant pariendi." He plays with the words *parentes* and *parientes*; *pepererunt* and *perierunt*, and, as to the application of his text to the conspirators who could not "bring forth" their crime, he says among other things: "Now to the mother's part. *The children came to the birth, and: The right and, the kindly copulative, were, to the birth they came, and borne they were.* In a kind consequence, who would looke for other? It is here, *venerunt, et non*: thither they came, and no farther; there stopped. *Ad*, in [*ad*, partum] is but *usque ad*, exclusive; that is, to it they came; through it they came not.

"And why came they not? By meanes (as here set downe) of a *non erant*. Somewhat there was not, that would have beene; somewhat missing: a *non erant* there was, whatsoever it was.

"What *non erant* was that?" . . . He keeps his hearers in suspense: it was not the fixed purpose; it was not the occasion, for they had their "cellar"; it was not the means, for they had their powder. . . . "These had they all: yet *non erant* (saith the text). What *non erant* might that be?" These conceits, mixed with medical indecencies, impossible to quote, are prolonged through pages and pages. "XCVI Sermons . . . published by His Majesties speciall command," London, 1632, fol. pp. 975 ff. (1st ed. 1628). Andrewes, 1555-1626, had first made himself known by his Latin treatise "Tortura

Great renown, too, for Hall, the satirist, who, having been ordained toward the end of the sixteenth century, had greeted James I.'s accession with a volume of flatteries. Supple, prolific, learned, an enemy of the Catholics, hostile to the Brownists, Puritans and other dissenters, he was in favour of a hierarchy in which he greatly desired to rise ; and he had all the qualities, and he took all the precautions, that might ensure success. From parsonage to parsonage and bishopric to bishopric, he attained the rich and important see of Norwich. There the Puritans found him at the time of their triumph, and by driving him from his palace and his cathedral, sacked with minute care, they avenged themselves in one day for all his past polemics.¹

His copious writings have the defect of their kind at that date ; his dialectic works are unpleasant reading by reason of their gall, their personalities, their bitterness ;² scarcely less so, in spite of some splendid passages, are the replies and counter-attacks of the poet-polemist Milton.

Torti," 1609, in answer to Cardinal Bellarmine. A translation of his "*Preces Private*" has been given by F. E. Brightman, London, 1903.

¹ He has related the catastrophe in a remarkable autobiographical fragment : "*Bishop Hall's Hard Measure*," 1647. The hostile crowd, formed into a mock procession, put on the sacerdotal vestments and, to the sound of a fiendish music made by "piping upon the destroyed organ pipes," went and burned on the market-place the spoils of the cathedral and the books containing the authorised liturgy. If one did not know what all this was about, one would think it the description of the sack of a Catholic church by the Reformers of the preceding century. Hall died in 1656 ; he had collected his works a first time in 1621 ; they were constantly reprinted. "*Works*," ed. Peter Hall, Oxford, 1837-9, 12 vols. 8vo. See *supra*, pp. 486, 496, and vol. II. pp. 431 ff.

² "A Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament," 1640, in favour of the liturgy and the hierarchy ; it is the beginning of the famous "*Smectymnuus*" quarrel, a name made up of the initials of the name and surname of five Puritans who answered Hall. He replied, they counter-replied ; Milton took part in the fray, Ussher too ; each excited the admiration of his partisans, but, of course, did not convince any of the adverse camp. Against Catholics, Hall wrote "*A Serious Disuasion from Popery*."

Hall's "Contemplations," "Holy Observations," "Devout Meditations" and sermons are written in a style lively, coloured, often eloquent, but overloaded with interrogations and exclamations—a way of being eloquent accessible to the least gifted: "Oh God! . . . oh infinite mercy! . . . What cursing of Herod! what wringing of hands! what condoling! what exclaiming was now in the streets of Bethlehem! O bloody Herod! . . . What could those infants have done? What likelihood was it? . . ." The chasing after effect, the far-fetched application and interpretation of every biblical word, lead him into ruts; he does not equal the bad taste of Andrewes, for that was not humanly possible, but he does not deny himself the use of incongruous similes: "It is not good to devour the favours of God too greedily, but to take them in that we may digest them."¹

Far more sincere and single-minded, Chillingworth sought less to please, and, as a reward, he avoided the bad taste that was then so pleasing. He was first a Protestant, then a Catholic, then a Protestant with a strong tendency to rationalism; he, too, served the cause of the *via media* and of the Church of England, and his defence was the more efficacious that it was disinterested. A godson of Laud, he long refused to take holy orders because of the Thirty-nine Articles, the authority of which it seemed to him impossible to prove by the Bible, and which supposed a sort of Anglican infallibility as irreconcilable with free inquiry as the Roman infallibility. Free inquiry is the foundation of his doctrine, the dogma for which

¹ "Contemplations" (in the ed. of 1714, vol. i. p. 9 and vol. ii. p. 16). One of his treatises is interesting as having the same subject as the "Pilgrim's Progress," namely, his "Devout Meditations on two Important Subjects"; but Hall remains exclamatory and abstract; Bunyan was just the reverse: plain, and, despite the allegory, giving the impression of reality; hence his just renown.

he battles, the basis of his great work : "The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation."¹

The tone is moderate for the time ; he does occasionally speak of his adversary as of a "spider" able to "suck poison" from the most wholesome works, but such blemishes are rare in his writings. He wants, above all, to be just and impartial ; the care he takes to be so renders, it is true, his book very hard to read ; for in order not to be taxed with skipping anything, he reproduces integrally the adversary's text, chapter by chapter, and after each chapter prints a detailed refutation, phrase by phrase ; and as the Catholic book he is answering was itself a reply to a Protestant one, the argumentation and the quotations cross, intercross and recross one another to such an extent that at moments, in the midst of all these windings, and despite some fine glades and large openings, one may become a little dazed and dizzy. Perhaps Chillingworth was a little dazed himself, for he ended, after many hesitations, by accepting a modest prebend, for which he signed the Thirty-nine Articles, as "articles of peace" he was told, to calm his scruples, rather than as articles of faith.

In the distance, the storm was rumbling ; soon it was no longer in the distance. James I. could, however, end his reign without having known more than undefined misgivings, and without having felt the anguish of the imminent catastrophe. Elizabeth's qualities and faults had adapted themselves marvellously to those of her people, and had secured the greatness of her reign ; but she had exhausted her own method and drawn from it every advantage it

¹ 1637 ; the work, being a "via media" one, excited an equal irritation among Catholics and among Puritans, and made a great stir. Captured by the parliamentary army, exhausted by illness, and, it is said, by the exhortations of a Puritan bent upon converting him, he died shortly after, January 30, 164[4]. "Works," Oxford, 1838, 3 vols. 8vo.

could yield. The people, who could not breathe, whose representation had been nearly annihilated, were becoming more and more exacting, they needed to be reassured ; all this Bacon had divined and James had never understood. The first Stuart had not the same good fortune as Elizabeth ; his qualities and his faults, not so great, but very real the ones and the others, did not fit in with the people's needs and the necessities of the hour. Personally honest, James considered that to be enough ; he gave no care to appearances ; he allowed the many to persuade themselves that he presided over the frolics of the most dissolute court that had ever been, and to hold him responsible for the morals of his favourites. Everyone was convinced that, to succeed with him, great merits and high virtues were unnecessary ; but one must not fail to order of the best tailor "a new jerkin, well bordered and not too short . . . diversly colourd . . . Many gallants failed in their suits for want of due observance of those matters" ; one must take care to touch lightly on all sorts of questions and not say : " "This is good or bad" ; but, ' If it were your Majesties good opinion, I myself should think so and so.' " Above all, court must be paid to the favourite of the hour, Robert Carr, the future Earl of Somerset ; protest that "the starrs are bright jewels fit for Carr's ears" ; praise the king's "roan jennet," who "surpasseth Bucephalus, and is worthy to be bestriden by Alexander . . . his eyes are fire, his tail is Berenice's locks." ¹

Many of the king's ideas are sound and equitable ; he has a horror of shedding blood, he desires peace, he has read much, he encourages artists and men of letters, and helps them in a much more efficacious manner than Elizabeth ; he has, in religious matters, far more tolerant dispositions than any of his predecessors for the last

¹ Lord Thomas Howard to Sir James Harington, 1611, in Harington, "Nugæ Antiquæ," 1804, vol. i. pp. 390 ff.

hundred years. But his qualities are much less apparent than his defects, his foibles and his faults, and the soundest part of the nation sees in him a frivolous pedant who wastes his time hunting and debating, and fritters away the resources of the state in pagan revels reproved by God.¹

Several of his speeches to Parliament are full of humour,² of fatherly kindness, and of wise advice. His recommendations to his nobles are the reverse of Louis XIV.'s to his own, and as wise as the French king's were to prove dangerous: let all gentlemen "depart to their own countries and houses"; they pretend to have understood that the order was only for Christmas last, but "it should alwayes continue." As things go, "with time, England will onely be London, and the whole countrey be left waste. . . . Let us keepe the old fashion of England," live in the country and keep hospitality there, "for which we were famous above all the countreys in the world."³

But in his very wisdom and his very kindness the members of the House, who, in other times, would have been pleased by such a familiar tone, discovered something very near disdain. This paternal king treated them too much as children: and the people's delegates flattered themselves, just like the sovereign himself, that they were entitled to speak in the name of the country, and that, drawing their notions from the Bible, they were, they too, inspired of God. Others, at another period, would have smiled, but they waxed indignant in their hearts when they heard the king tell them humorously of their faults:

¹ On which see Nichol's "Progresses of King James I.," London, 1828, 3 vols. 4to.

² Alluding to his wants of money, he ends one of his speeches saying: "I must conclude like a grey frier, in speaking for my selfe at last." 1610; "Workes," p. 547.

³ "A speech in the Starre-chamber," 1616; "Workes," p. 568.

they had no mind to be merry. Be brief, said James (in the course, it is true, of a very long speech): "It is no place then for particular men to . . . make shew of their eloquence by tyning (losing) the time with long studied and eloquent orations." With that gift of observation to be met with everywhere at that date, and which makes the royal writings of great interest as regards manners,¹ the king describes habits which had already begun to prevail in the political assemblies of his day: "Men," said he, "should be ashamed to make shew of the quicknesse of their wits here, either in taunting, scoffing, or detracting the prince or state in any point, or yet in breaking jests upon their fellowes, for which the ordinaries or ale houses are fitter places than this honourable and high court of Parliament."²

But the shadows were deepening, and the parliamentarians of James I. were decidedly not inclined to merriment. They were little inclined to it, especially when they heard their sovereign mingle in his speeches, with the most unfortunate persistence, the assertion of his absolutist theories. Themselves men with theories, to the which the religious quarrels had accustomed the whole kingdom, having great faith in ideas, they noted with anxiety and stupefaction the prince's statements as to his "divine

¹ Especially his "Counterblaste to Tobacco": abusive consumption of tobacco at the ordinary; at the army, where a soldier will more willingly go without bread than without tobacco; at dinner, where people sit, "tossing of tobacco pipes and puffing of the smoke of tobacco one to another, making the filthy smoke and stinke thereof, to exhale athwart the dishes and infect the aire"; in ladies' bowers, where every woman of fashion will give, "out of her faire hand, a pipe of tobacco" to her "servant."—"Workes of the most high and mightie Prince, James," etc., London, 1616, fol. pp. 220 ff. But the king took pleasure more especially in dealing with abstruse questions, for which he considered himself particularly gifted: "Dæmonologie," "A Paraphrase upon Revelation," etc. At Oxford, he holds a discussion in Latin on the philosopher's stone: "An aurum, artis opera, possit confici."—Nichol, "Progresses," vol. i., year 1605.

² Speech of 1605; "Workes," 1616, p. 507.

right," and paid but small attention to the practical extenuations which he sometimes added to his expositions of principles.¹

King by divine right, James considered himself as a super-human personage, inspired with celestial wisdom, a conviction in which he was confirmed by the unanimous homages of the great, the prelates, and men of letters of his day. Remember, he wrote to his son, aged five, "God . . . made you a little GOD, to sit on his Throne, and rule over other men."² It is from God's very throne that a king speaks to his subjects. And addressing the representatives of the nation, in a solemn sitting of Parliament, he said to them: "Kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himselfe they are called Gods." Speaker and listeners stood indeed far apart.

Out of reaction against the ultra-liberal theories of his tutor, Buchanan,³ and out of resentment for the

¹ "It is sedition in subjects to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power: but just kings wil ever be willing to declare what they wil do, if they wil not incurre the curse of God. I wil not be content that my power be disputed upon: but I shall ever be willing to make the reason appeare of all my doings"—which would have been acting in accordance with Bacon's often repeated recommendations. Speech of 1609; "Workes," p. 531.

² "Basilicon Doron," 1599, addressed to his gifted son, Prince Henry, prematurely carried off, at eighteen, by typhoid fever; "Workes," p. 148. He develops the same theory in his treatise: "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies," *ibid.* p. 194, and in his speech to Parliament of 16[10], p. 529.

³ "*B[uchananus]*.—In Rege creando quid potissimum spectarunt homines?—*M[atellanus]*. Populi, ut opinor, utilitatem.—*B.* Quod si nullus hominum cœtus esset, regibus non foret opus?—*M.* Nihil prorsus.—*B.* Populus igitur rege præstantior.—*M.* Necesse est.—*B.* Si præstantior est, etiam et major. Rex igitur, cum ad populi iudicium vocatur, minor ad majorem in jus vocatur." The whole trial of Charles I. was already in essence in this treatise, dedicated to his father: "De jure regni apud Scotos, Dialogus, authore Georgio Buchanano," 1579; re-edited, Edinburgh, 1582, fol. The famous "Vindiciæ contra Tyrannos," often attributed to Languet, and which recognised in the people, or its representatives, a power superior to the king's, had appeared in Edinburgh, also in 1579.

mishaps and dangers that Scottish plots had made him know in his youth, he had become more and more hostile to everything that might have limited his power: Parliament, clergy, dissenting ministers, and above all those Puritans who, like himself, appealed directly to God, and invoked, with disquieting obstinacy, a divine right rivalling his own. Without having the least idea of their real strength, James flattered himself that he held them in check, and that he could reduce their quibbles to naught by the power of his arguments: "I have pepperid thaime . . . soundlie," did he write to a friend after the famous conferences of 1604; their reasons were pitiful: "I was forcid at last to saye unto thaime" that if a scholar disputing in a college had not done better, then "shoulde the rodde have plyed upon the poore boyes buttokis."¹

He was far too self-confident to profit by warnings, whether they came from events or from men. He went on, believing himself seated upon the clouds, admiring his own condescension in furnishing, now and then, explanations of which he thus lost all the profit; he had recourse to the hated system of *benevolences*; he scolded the Commons, exasperated them, dismissed them. The blunder was sometimes so glaring that mere spectators remarked it and were filled with apprehension.²

¹ To "Blake," undated, but 1604; Ellis, "Original Letters," 3rd series, vol. iv. p. 161. Mr. Gardiner has shown that this letter is addressed, not to a pretended Blake, but to Northampton, "History of England," 1603-42, London, 1893, i. p. 159.

² John Chamberlain, who was not a great mind, wrote to Winwood in 1610: "The 21st of this present, he made another speech to both the houses, but so little to their satisfaction that I hear it bred generally much discomfort to see our monarchical power and royal prerogative strained so high, and made so transcendent in every way, that if the practice should follow the positions, we are not like to leave our successors that freedom which we received from our forefathers."—Spedding, "Letters . . . of Bacon," vol. iv. p. 182. The correspondence of Chamberlain (born in 1553, d. 1627) incompletely

None of his mistakes are repaired by his son. Elegant, authoritative and vacillating, Charles lets the Archbishop of Canterbury settle the religious question as he chooses, and William Laud was another personage whose qualities and defects did not fit in with the needs of the times.¹ A determined partisan of the *via media*, keeping at equal distance from Rome and from Geneva, learned, sincere, virtuous, the prelate was convinced that it was sufficient to follow one's conscience in order to do well. He decided, he ruled, explaining naught, careless of those appearances by which he was judged, disdaining to draw attention to the services he was rendering at the peril of his life to morals, good order, and above all to the cause of the English Church. He re-established discipline at Oxford, put an end to the scandals of which St. Paul's Cathedral was the scene; no one took any heed, except those who suffered by his reforms, and what they felt was not gratitude. But he bowed on entering a church, and bowed too at the name of Jesus: sacrilege, paganism, popery! cried the Puritans. He encouraged the king in his autocratic tendencies, accepted and commended his belief in his "divine right," made of that right one of the canons of the church. Hard on the Puritans, he was no less so on the frivolous cavaliers, those "splendid transgressors" as Clarendon called them, who repaid his reproofs with hatred. He knew perfectly how the matter stood, and went on untroubled: "God, I beseech him, make me good corn, for I am between two great factions, very like corn

published (Camden Soc. 1861, and Birch "Court and Times of James I.," 1849, 2 vols.), has a great documentary, but no literary, value.

¹ "Whole Works," Oxford, 1847, ff. 7 vols. 8vo. In vol. iii., remarkable prayers, especially those he had composed for his own use, to incite himself to virtue, and his "Diary," a simple memento of facts, rarely accompanied by appreciations; no document, however, gives a better knowledge of his character, one of the best and strongest of the time.

between two mill-stones." ¹ He was foreseeing but too well his destiny.

The opposition grows and becomes threatening; Charles persists; he reigns "by the grace of God," and is accountable to God alone. For eleven consecutive years, Parliament is not convened; he collects taxes that have not been voted; merely for having refused an illegal tax of twenty shillings, Hampden becomes, in the eyes of the people, a hero and a martyr: his act is a symbol. The Puritans, stronger than ever in the land, are more and more scoffed at, ridiculed on the stage, pilloried. To the coarse attacks made upon them, Prynne replies in a strain coarser still; his ears are cropped.² Charles has married Henrietta of France, who establishes the Catholic form of worship in the palace, and it becomes elegant to follow its ceremonies; young cavaliers, their handsome faces framed with those love-locks against which the same Prynne writes a regular treatise,³ crowd to the Queen's chapel. According to the Puritans, the slightest trace of worldliness is a crime against God, and according to those cavaliers, who will die at Naseby or reappear more impertinent than ever in Gramont's "Memoirs," everything is pardonable save in-

¹ Letter to Lord Wentworth, the future Strafford, November 1, 1637; "Works," vii. 379.

² Principal treatise: "Histrio-mastix, the Players Scourge, or Actors Tragedie. . . . Wherein it is largely evidenced . . . by the authorities of . . . 55 Synodes and councils, of 71 fathers and Christian writers . . . of 40 heathen philosophers . . . that popular stage playes . . . are sinfull, heathenish, lewde, ungodly spectacles," London, 1633, 4to. A violent diatribe, strangely divided into acts and scenes, stuffed full of quotations; very hard reading, but useful to consult on account of the contemporaneous beliefs and facts related by the author. Cf. "Documents relating to the proceedings against William Prynne in 1634 and 1637," ed. Gardiner, Camden Society, 1877. He died, a royal functionary, in 1669.

³ "The Unlovelinesse of Love-lockes . . . proving the wearing and nourishing of a locke or love-locke, to be altogether unseemely and unlawfull unto Christians . . ." London, 1628, 4to.

elegance, save displeasing the artistic and lettered prince who is their master, who has knighted Van Dyck, who collects pictures and reads Shakespeare.

The conflict is the more redoubtable that it is at once religious and political ; the mass of the nation is sincere, it is indignant at the idea of an episcopal hierarchy which is but a prolongation of the civil administration, and of a religion which looks like an expedient, a makeshift, a semi-worldly organisation, fruit of an understanding come to, after proper bargaining, between the royal authority and prelates, themselves royal functionaries—a religion created in the name of free inquiry and which prohibits any inquiry ; endowed with arbitrary articles, several times modified by king or queen, and now become rules of faith out of which there is no salvation ; no salvation, and no livings either, no bishoprics, no endowments, but suspicion, prison, the pillory, red-hot irons, sometimes the scaffold. The interference of the civil power with things spiritual revolts believers ; it is religion, on the contrary, that ought to dominate in the state, in the family, and everywhere. What interests are comparable to those of eternal salvation, to those of God ? “ The strength of all Government is religion,” said Sir John Eliot in an oration delivered before the Commons in June, 1625 ; “ the danger is as much in our own Achitophels as from Moab and all the armies of the Philistines.”

Stores of hatred and contempt are being heaped up on both sides ; animosities become incurable ; the explosion will be more formidable in proportion as the compression will have lasted longer. To the treatises recommending the compromises, the transactions, the middle way organisation whence had proceeded the Church of England, Richard Sibbes replies : What may we think of those “ that would bring light and darkness, Christ and Anti-Christ, the ark and Dagon together, that

would reconcile us as if it were no great matter?"¹ And it is the most accommodating, the gentlest, the most "heavenly" of Puritans who speaks thus. No, certainly; no compromise is any longer possible. Each one is sure of his right; each considers himself as the representative of God, as acting in God's behalf. To the war of pamphlets, real war is about to succeed; cannon, and the block, will be the supreme arguments, *ultimæ rationes*.

Charles gives way; he allows the impeachment of Laud, the execution of Strafford, the passing of a law which makes it impossible for him to dissolve the Commons without their own consent; soon London will have ceased to belong to him, and when he comes back there, seven years after, it will be to pass from that banqueting hall, where he had had the triumph of James I. painted by Rubens, to the scaffold of Whitehall.

In 1642, the civil war breaks out; the theatres are closed;² a young poet who was to be the great poet of the century, Milton, forgets the Muses, dashes into the storm, and busies himself only with the quarrels between peoples and kings. In the parliamentary army, people begin to

¹ Sermon on "The Ungodly's Misery"; "Complete Works," ed. Grosart, Edinburgh, 1862, 7 vols. 8vo; vol. i. p. 388. He says elsewhere: "They, out of the pride of their heart, think they may do well enough without the helps of the word and sacraments, and think Christ took not state enough upon him; and therefore they will mend the matter with their own devices, whereby they may give better content to church and blood as in popery."—"The bruised Reede and smoaking Flax," 1629-30. He died in 1635.

² And shortly after torn down: the Globe was razed to the ground in 1644, the Blackfriars in 1655; the Phoenix, the Fortune, and Salisbury Theatre were demolished by a company of soldiers in 1649; the Hope, which gave sometimes bear-fights and sometimes plays (but had "soon ceased to be used for anything but baiting and perhaps fencing matches and the like."—Greg, "Henslowe's Diary," 1908, vol. ii. p. 41), was also torn down by soldiers, and seven bears were shot, February 9, 1655. Contemporary notes, published by Mr. Furnivall, *Academy*, October 28, 1882.

talk of an officer, taciturn and authoritative, of set principles and rigid morals, former pupil of Cambridge, and an efficient orator in the House of Commons, Oliver Cromwell.

England was about to traverse a tragic crisis, the most extraordinary, perhaps, that any European nation had known since the fall of the Roman Empire.

APPENDIX.



TEXT OF SULLY-PRUDHOMME'S LETTER QUOTED p. 176.

CHATENAY (SEINE)

18 *Novembre*, 1904.

MON CHER CONFRÈRE ET AMI, . . . Les grandes affaires . . . vous éloignent de la France sans chasser de votre mémoire le souvenir de ceux qui parlent et cultivent au loin votre langue maternelle.

J'en ai exploité la forme la plus apte à l'expression des sentiments bien avant d'en avoir approfondi l'étude. J'ai d'ailleurs peu lu et je suis infiniment moins instruit que vous de la poésie étrangère. Je me console de ma première ignorance, car si j'avais connu, avant de versifier, tout ce qui s'est écrit sur l'amour, la plume me serait tombée des mains; j'aurais reconnu chez d'autres mes propres émotions et même, dans leur vie, des circonstances analogues à celles qui les ont fait naître dans la mienne. J'avoue, à ma honte, que j'étais trop ignorant pour être plagiaire. Quoi d'étonnant, en vérité, que le cœur humain qui se renouvelle à des millions d'exemplaires, avec ses caractères spécifiques dans des milieux sociaux semblables (du moins de même origine), communique à l'expression

poétique des sentiments ce que ceux-ci ont de commun chez tous les individus sous des climats peu différents ? Je partage entièrement votre avis ; on trouvera toujours à n'importe quelle œuvre d'art, littéraire ou autre, inspirée par le cœur, des antécédents qui pourront être donnés pour ses modèles et regardés comme imités. La critique, en s'attachant à des rapprochements de ce genre, fait suspecter bien à tort l'originalité du poète qu'elle examine. Cette originalité se reconnaît moins à ce qu'il dit qu'au timbre inaliénable, absolument individuel de sa voix, à son accent et au mouvement que sa passion imprime à son chant. Il est d'autant plus personnel qu'il a mieux su reconquérir la vibration propre de sa sensibilité sur la mesure rythmique du vers, laquelle est impersonnelle. Le vers peut se définir : la forme littéraire qui introduit dans le langage le plus de musique possible, c'est-à-dire la musique proprement dite moins les notes, dont le charme trop absorbant compromettrait la claire intelligence du sens des mots. C'est donc à l'expression musicale (expression non conventionnelle mais naturelle) de la phrase que le vers doit sa valeur propre. Il n'y a qu'à écouter un bon lecteur, un bon orateur, surtout un bon acteur pour se rendre compte de tout ce que, dans le langage, le signe naturel (musique ou geste) apporte de personnel à l'œuvre littéraire. Un vrai poète communique à ses vers des ressources d'harmonie qui permettent à la diction d'en tirer des effets expressifs n'empruntant rien à aucun autre poème. Ce n'est, d'ailleurs, évidemment pas l'unique sorte d'originalité dont il soit capable. Il peut introduire du nouveau dans les parties narratives de son œuvre ; il peut aussi se faire remarquer pour l'étrangeté de sa manière de sentir, mais dans ce dernier cas il doit renoncer à faire naître la sympathie et se contenter de surprendre. Ce n'est point par là surtout qu'il remplit sa fonction spéciale et qu'il plaît ; c'est plutôt par une finesse, une délicatesse

d'analyse qui, dans ses propres émotions, révèle les lecteurs à eux-mêmes. En réalité il ne leur apprend rien de nouveau et n'y prétend pas, il leur procure seulement la satisfaction de se reconnaître. Le cœur humain est le lieu commun exploité par la poésie ; il offre chez tous les poètes la même gamme de sentiments mais avec des tonalités différentes.

Je ne peux qu'effleurer la question très intéressante que vous soulevez, je souffre presque sans relâche et j'ai dû différer de vous répondre, je n'étais pas en état d'écrire ces jours derniers. Voilà le quatrième hiver que je passe dans la retraite à la campagne, aux environs de Paris ; je marche très difficilement et ne fais plus que de très rares apparitions aux séances de l'Académie. Je corrige, en ce moment, les épreuves d'un ouvrage commencé il y a dix ans et longtemps abandonné ; je m'y suis remis enfin. Il a pour titre : La vraie religion selon Pascal, et pour sous-titre : Essai d'une ordonnance purement logique de ses pensées relatives à la religion. Il ne paraîtra qu'en Janvier prochain. L'introduction a paru dans un numéro déjà fort ancien de la *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Je vous souhaite [etc.].

SULLY PRUDHOMME.

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